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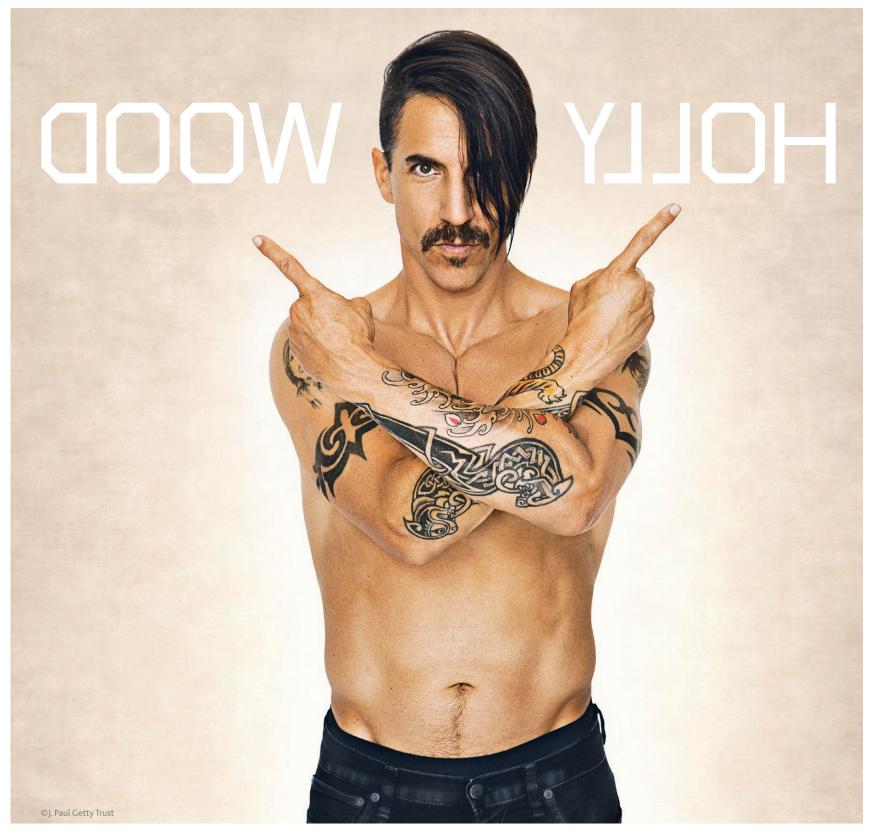
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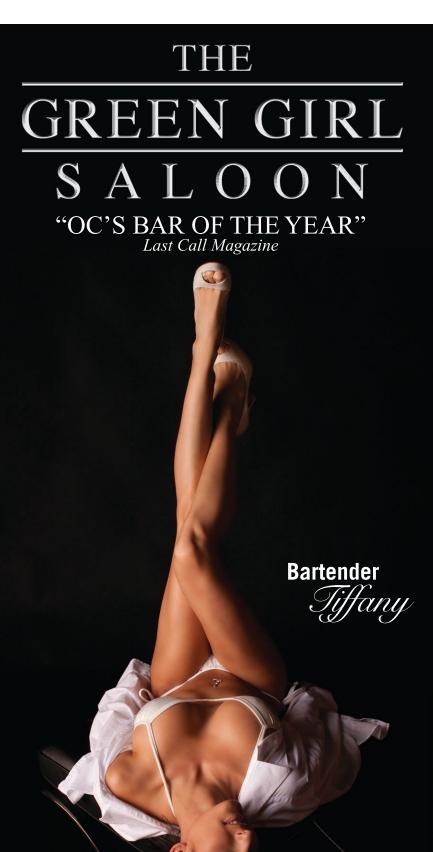


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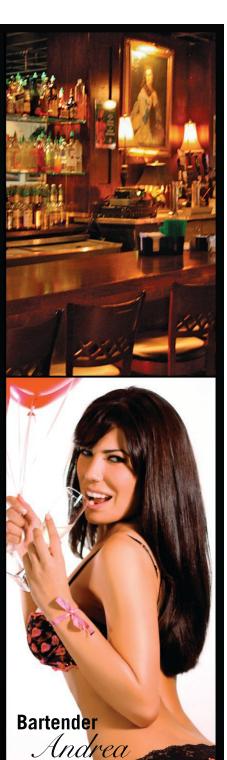








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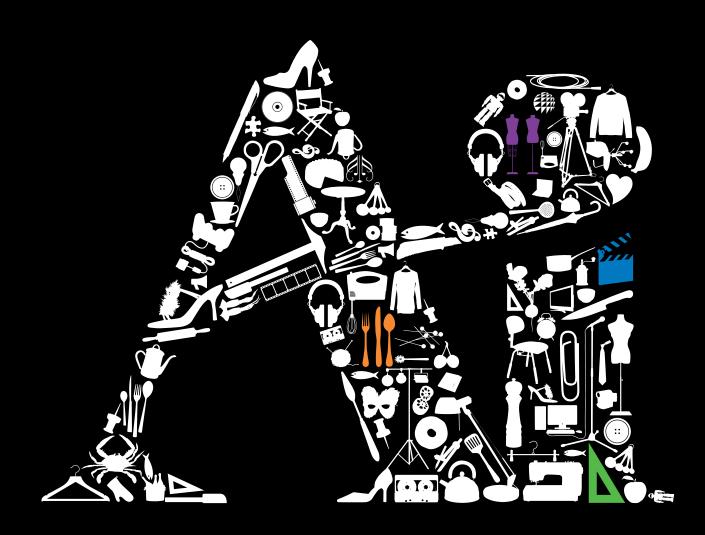


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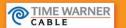
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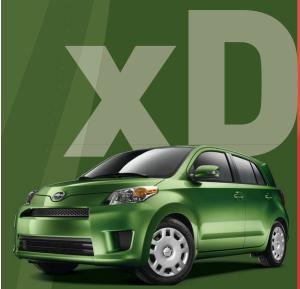








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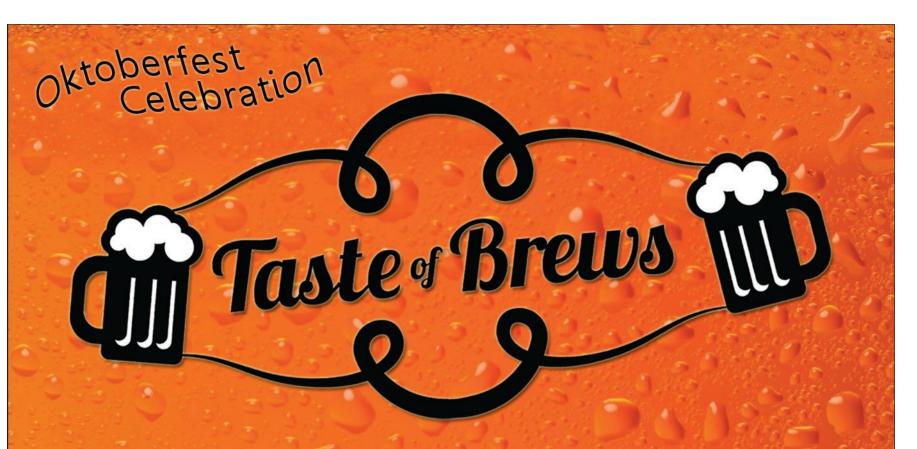
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PLAYER 1

READY?

If Orange County were a video game, what kind would it be? A Massively Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game, only with lifted F-150s instead of Goblin Zeppelins? A casual game in which you fling yourself from a catapult at such attractions as Disneyland, Irvine Regional Park and the Big A? A side-scroller with shopping at South Coast Plaza instead of shooting at bad guys? A fake-guitar-strummin' family-fun console game set

at Detroit Bar? A cooking challenge that has you whipping up pizza, date shakes and pho? Something truly bizarre involving pipes, mushrooms, stoned turtles and beer?

Can't decide? Don't fret: With OC Weekly's Best Of 2011, you get all of the above! So drop those coins, press that A button and joystick your way through our picks for OC's finest offerings—along with your own selections and some easter eggs from OC's hall of famers.

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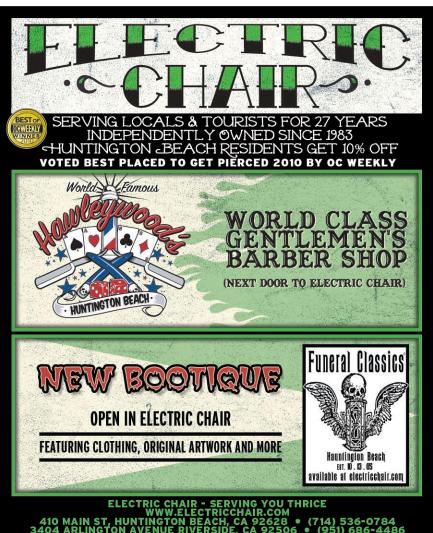
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With the app, it's easy to look up 2011's winners in 300-plus categories as well as more than a dozen past issues. There's dining, nightlife, culture, recreation, and more. The Best Of app features an editorially curated selection of places that makes the city a playground both for locals and visitors.

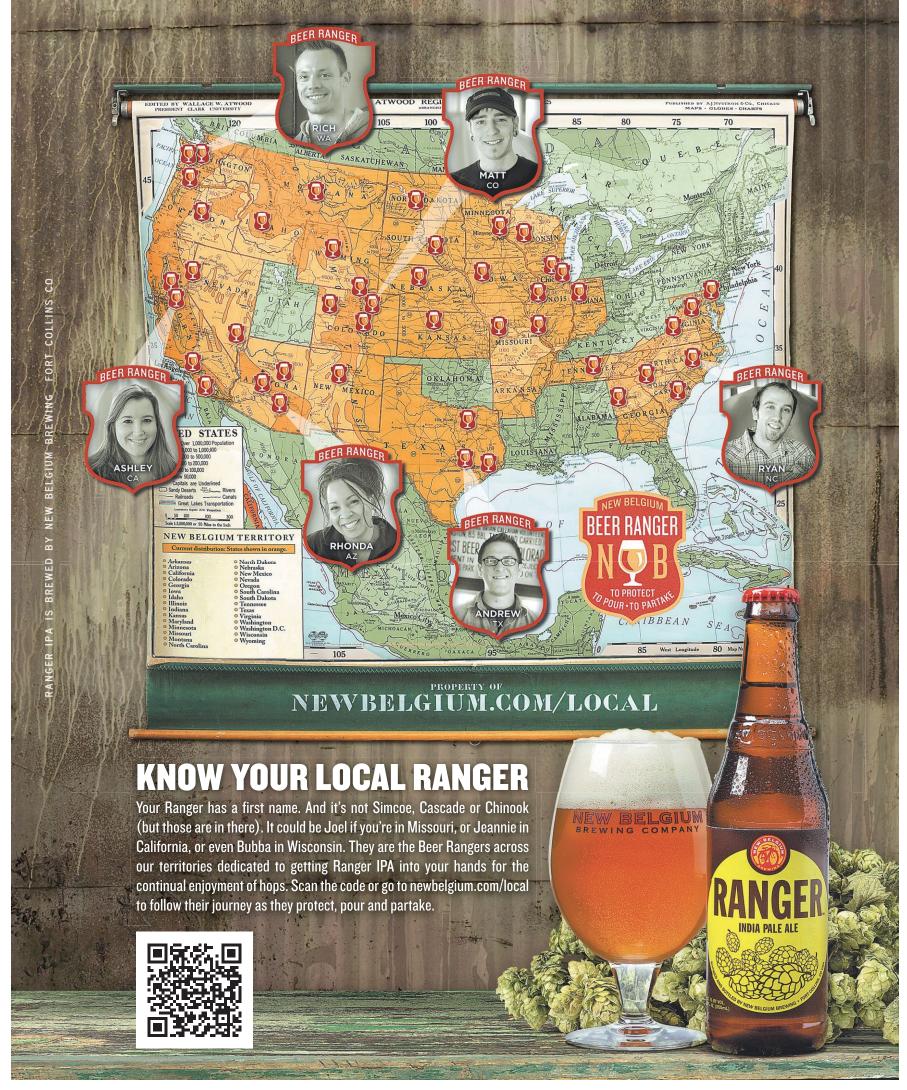
Traveling outside OC? The app also features Best Of winners in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and others.







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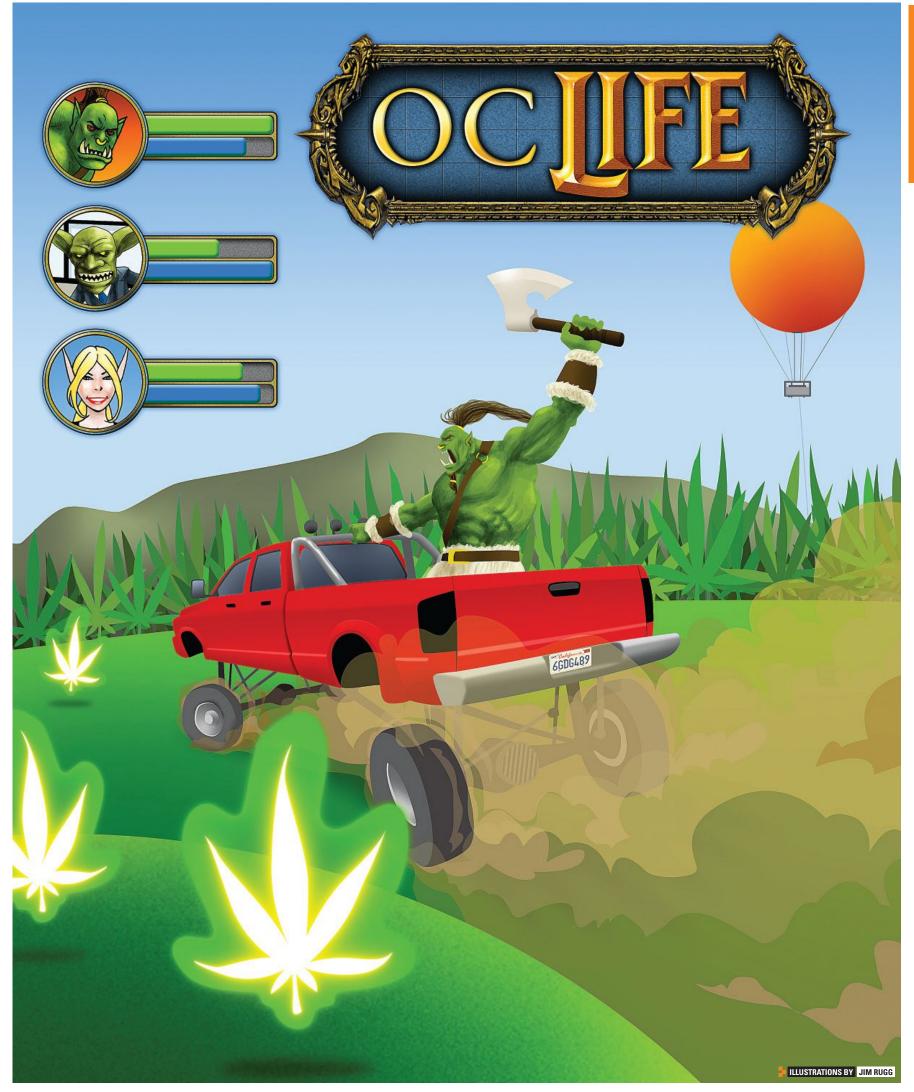
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BEST VOICE FOR

Nick Berardino

Whether he's working to protect the jobs of employees throughout Orange County, or jousting with his fellow board members at meetings at the Orange County Fairgrounds, Nick Berardino is a tough character. He's an idealist who doesn't take kindly to people in power exerting any type of unjust control over those who don't want or know how to be heard. He's good at constructive arguing or, as some call it, negotiating. He has been involved in labor negotiations for more than 30 years with the Orange County Employees Association, so there's not much that rattles him. He'll ask the uncomfortable questions, he'll call people out on their BS or stare down the most imposing of political figures-and then he'll turn to his constituents and smile and wink. He has their backs.

BEST NEW PUBLIC OFFICIAL

Bao Nguyen

In the past, we've asked Bao Nguyen for quotes on topics, and he has politely refused. Unlike so many in local politics, Nguyen-one of Orange County's leading progressive activists-prefers accomplishments to accolades and publicity. In June, the 31-year-old UC Irvine graduate, who's a Buddhist and a public-school teacher, was appointed to a position on the Garden Grove Unified School District's board when Dr. KimOanh NguyenLam, another one of our favorites, accepted a job in Washington, D.C. While others with political aspirations might have been socializing at watering holes, Bao quietly volunteered to aid needy elderly citizens in North OC. Hopefully, his new role will be a continuation of what we've seen in the past: a man who is incredibly sensitive to community rights and wrongs and isn't afraid to speak up.

BEST GADFLY

Barbara Kogerman

Before there was the city of Bell scandal (starring Huntington Beach's Robert Rizzo), there was Barbara Kogerman of Laguna Hills trying to get anyone to listen to what she was uncovering about excessive compensation of city staffers and elected officials in Orange County. The wife of former Marine Corps officer, El Toro International Airport fighter and Orange County Great Park board member Bill, Kogerman first targeted her own city, an obsession she was later able to spin into a successful run for the Laguna Hills City Council. Fortunately, she did not confine her digging to that 'burb. Assisted by two college students and publicrecords requests, Kogerman uncovered lavish pay, benefits and pensions throughout local governments in the county. Her investigative work was later validated by

the grand jury, The Orange County Register and government watchdog groups that have lavished her with awards. Most cities, with a sense of shame, posted some elements of compensation on their websites (with varying degrees of success). The Los Angeles Times followed up by spotlighting excessive pay in LA County, which eventually brought the journos to Bell and Hogg Boss Rizzo. Subsequently, the state's controller and attorney general (now Governor Jerry Brown) called for disclosure by all cities of their city managers' compensation, and legislation was introduced to address excessive compensation and lack of transparency. Initially ignored, Kogerman is now a national spokesperson for local compensation reform, transparency and accountability.

BEST MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN NORTH ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County Board of Supervisors

In May, the county's Board of Supervisors voted without a word of public discussion to pay \$249,975 in taxpayer funds to the Truth Agency, a Santa Ana government consulting firm, for the task of convincing residents they should visit county parks.

BEST MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County Board of Supervisors

In June, the county's Board of Supervisors voted without a word of public discussion to give businesses at the Dana Point Harbor \$145,800 in taxpayer funds to publicize their private companies.

BEST MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN CORSTAL ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County Board of Supervisors

In February, the county's Board of Supervisors voted without a word of public discussion to pay a movie producer \$146,830 in taxpayer funds to replace the county's 9-year-old film about the wonders of bird migration that screens at the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve.

BEST POLITICAL PROTEST

Fullerton's protests against dirty cops

Over the years, mostly suburban Orange County hasn't exactly been a hotbed of political unrest. Sure, we have rabid right-wingers who are always foaming at the mouth because it's no longer 1952, blacks can vote, and the Cold War is over. But something remarkable happened this year: Local residents, who've made

it their practice to steadfastly look away from police violence and corruption, finally had enough and hit the pavement to say so. If you had bet us \$50 a year ago that we'd see a woman holding a "Fuck the Police" sign in public, we'd have driven you directly to Patton State mental hospital. Yet, the brutal slaying in July of Kelly Thomas, a 135-pound homeless man, by six Fullerton cops sparked the biggest, most passionate community protests we've seen since the fight over the building of an international airport at the defunct El Toro Marine Corps Air Station more than a decade ago. Week after week and city meeting after city meeting brought out hundreds of angry protesters, who eventually dubbed themselves "Kelly's Army." Police agencies love to bury dirty laundry in the hopes the public will forget, but that hasn't

Montage Laguna Beach

I Heart Old Towne Orange

Jillian Reynolds

BEST BLOG

BEST NEWSCRSTER

happened in this case. The protesters demanded an honest, thorough explanation and, if appropriate, for prosecutors to charge the cops with unnecessarily killing the unarmed Thomas. When DA Tony Rackauckas charged one cop with second-degree murder and another with involuntary manslaughter on Sept. 21, the protesters exulted—but also declared they would keep the pressure on the city until all of the officers, even the department itself, is held fully accountable for Thomas' death.



BEST POLITICAL EXCHANGE

Scott Baugh and Marilyn Davenport

FOX-KTTV 11

Dallas Raines

Vin Scully

BEST WEATHERCASTER

BEST SPORTSCASTER

In April, Orange County Republican Central Committee member Marilyn Davenport of Fullerton sent an email







photograph to fellow conservatives that depicted President Barack Obama and his parents as chimpanzees, with the caption "Now you know why no birth certificate." When first contacted by the Weekly, Davenport, who is elderly, didn't understand the problem of equating the first African American U.S. president with a monkey. She said she didn't deserve any scrutiny because the image wasn't racist, but rather "amusing" and "an Internet joke." In response, Davenport's leader at the OC GOP, Scott Baugh, labeled the email "despicable" and said, "It is dripping with racism, and it does not promote the type of message Orange County Republicans want to deliver to the public."

BEST POLITICAL COUP

Repair Costa Mesa

Costa Mesa was once known for ritzy South Coast Plaza, great dive bars and its toothless, deranged, white-supremacist gangsters. But thanks to Repair Costa Mesa-a conglomeration of angry citizens, local public employees and labor-union bosses-the city is the main California proving ground for conservative policies to curtail city-worker wages and wasteful programs during dismal economic years. All but one of the city's all-Republican council has supported multimillion-dollar cuts and the chopping of more than 200 city jobs. Normally, Republicans can do whatever they want in Orange County, except in Santa Ana. But Costa Mesa's action, led by freshman Councilman Jim Righeimer, prompted Repair Costa Mesa to produce an avalanche of potent daily cable-TV commercials that accuses four of the politicians-Righeimer, Eric Bever, Garv Monahan and Steve Mensinger-of lying about the city's true financial condition to execute a nationwide Republican conspiracy against unions. That message has been drilled into our minds-sometimes a dozen times per day—month after month. Who knew that in such a traditionally anti-union locale as OC, unions would fight back so vigorously and put the likes of a Righeimer, a cagey veteran politician, scurrying for defenders on his own turf?

BEST POLICE AGENCY

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Customs Enforcement

It takes something really extraordinary to steer OC Weekly to say anything nice about la migra, but some people just really deserve getting their asses kicked out of the country. People such as Pedro Pimentel Rios, a former Guatemalan special-forces officer and U.S. Army School of the Americas instructor who allegedly raped numerous girls and women at Dos Erres, a tiny village near Guatemala's border with Mexico, during the December 1982 massacre of more than 250 people. (And yes, this was before he was promoted to his military

teaching job.) The Dos Erres atrocity ranks as perhaps the most gruesome in Guatemala's entire civil war and is too disturbing to detail here, except to say it was a long, protracted, insanely vicious bloodbath. Rare kudos therefore to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for finding this guy last year and handing him over to the Guatemalan police in July. Vaya con Diós, pendejo.

BEST JUDGE

William R. Froeberg

Despite what we might have implied in the past, Orange County Superior Court Judge William R. Froeberg was not the inspiration for Montgomery Burns, the villainous Springfield Nuclear Power Plant owner on The Simpsons. But, come on, they do look remarkably alike! Froeberg, however, isn't in the profit business. His task is to efficiently and fairly run some of OC's most complicated criminal trials, and while he isn't as cold as some of his colleagues, he's not particularly endearing either. Perhaps he is unfairly hampered by that seemingly permanent scowl. But in one of this year's most sensational murder trials, the one involving ex-NFL linebacker Eric Naposki, Froeberg provided seasoned management from his perch. He didn't hamper prosecutors while he gave in to some of Naposki's ultimately unsuccessful defense demands, probably to avoid any appellate errors. He treated all the parties with respect. He ran the trial on time. He even made jurors' lives easier with occasional, much-needed funny quips when the lawyers got too heated-a touch of thoughtful humanity sorely needed in our local judicial officers.

BEST POLITICIAN

Fred Karger

Calling someone the best politician can be the same as equating that person with a slimy reptile. Indeed, look around OC, and you'll find plenty of snakes in elected office. But this year, we're happy to give the nod to Fred Karger. Okay, sure, he was once lower than a snake when he worked as a cutthroat, secretly gay Republican political operative for the likes of Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford. But nowadays, Karger, who has never held elective office, has found not just the courage to come out of the closet, but the personable Laguna Beach resident is also an unapologetic fiscal conservative who is vocally pressing his political party to stop employing shameless anti-gay tactics. He's also pro-choice and, unlike George W. Bush. anti-stupid wars. Oh, and Karger's running to win the Republican nomination to take on President Barack Obama in November 2012. Does he have a chance? No, but sometimes there have to be folks willing to sacrifice themselves to make a good point, and Fred's that kind of noble man.

READERS' CHOICE: NO SUCH THING



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Dr. Soung, assistant clinical professor of dermatology and Director of dermatology clinical research as ersity of California, Irvine Soung is a board certified der matologist who has a broad interes in medical and cosmetic dermatol ogy and a clinical research focus on ogy and a cunical research focus on finding new treatments for psoria-sis. Dr. Soung treats a variety of adult and pediatric skin conditions and has expertise in the treatment









october 14-20, 2011 25















BEST BREWING POLITICAL BATTLE

Susan Kang Schroeder vs. Todd Spitzer

Yes, we know Todd Spitzer-OC's most talkative politician-has shifted away from his behind-the-scenes challenge to Susan Kang Schroeder-a Machiavellian master—in the race to assume control over the district attorney's office when Tony Rackauckas retires. He's presently running against Chuck DeVore, a fellow Republican, for an open county supervisor's seat in the 2012 election. However, don't think for a moment that either Spitzer, who was fired as a prosecutor last year by Rackauckas, or Schroeder, who is Rackauckas' chief of staff, is thinking about anything but taking the other down. Both adamantly believe the other would destroy the DA's office. Given the amount of bad blood, it's possible the potential future battle could result in mutual destruction. Our advice: Stock up on popcorn, and find a good seat.

BEST EX-POLITICIAN

Thomas J. Camobell

We've welcomed the move of many folks to other states-say, Mike Carona, how's that federal prison cell in Colorado? But at the same time we heartily applaud the arrival of a relative newcomer. Former, five-time Republican congressman from Northern California Tom Campbell nowadays serves as dean of Chapman University's School of Law. In the political realm, he was a fierce free-market advocate, but unlike a majority of his Republican colleagues in these parts, he also championed progressive social beliefs. He stood by a woman's right to choose an abortion or not, and he never abandoned the principle that gay and lesbian citizens are entitled to equal rights. Perhaps Campbell's honorable presence in a sea of Neanderthal GOPers will inspire more than a few young Republicans to not turn so far to the nutty right.

BEST PROTESTING GROUP

Orange County Fairgrounds Preservation Society It didn't do anything single-handedly (it had some allies pushing hard in Sacramento), but the Orange County Fairgrounds Preservation Society (OCFPS) was integral in preventing the sale of the OC Fairgrounds to private developers. Its members—some of whom are stakeholders of the grounds and from the equestrian center and the OC Marketplace-were digging for documents, making calls, raising awareness and putting in the time to figure out all the behind-the-scenes posturing that almost pushed the sale through. Partly because of the society's work, Governor Jerry Brown didn't agree with outgoing governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and decided the sale was not in the best interest of the public or the state. More Australian battered potatoes for us all! Oh,

and given this history, do you think the OC

Marketplace will take its recent eviction lying down? Yeah, we don't either.

BEST DOWNTOWN

Orange Circle

The intersection of Chapman Avenue and Glassell Street in Orange used to be a place where groups would gather for a weekend afternoon of antiquing, wandering from shop to shop and purchasing dated treasures. But the plethora of antique shops has been reduced to a mere handful, as the city of Orange has reworked the area into one that attracts families and the college crowd, too. An eclectic mix of restaurants and shops moved in, complementing the few bars and one of the most compelling reasons to visit: Felix Continental Cafe. Just a few years ago, the only reason students from nearby Chapman University would even bother making their way toward the area was for Thursday-night debauchery at Paul's Cocktails, the International Street Fair in September or a dunk in the circle's fountain during the Undie Run, but the makeover has made it possible to breach the age divide. Well done, Orange. READERS' CHOICE: LAGUNA BEACH

BEST RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Old Towne Orange Historic District As much as we love the whole midcentury-modern thing (and we do), there was some damn-fine architecture going up in the early part of the 20th Century, as well as the tail end of the 19th. And the best place to see how entire neighborhoods looked a century ago is the blocks surrounding the Orange Circle. Stroll these placid streets, and you'll spot a diversity of architectural styles, from endearingly boxy hip-roof cottages to broad-gabled Craftsmans to elegantly understated Folk Victorians. But what the structures share is a sense of proportion and scale: They're in harmony with the size of the lot, their neighbors, the well-developed tree cover. Factor in the easy walking/biking distance to the shops and restaurants of the ever-moreinteresting intersection of Chapman Avenue and Glassell Street, and even allowing for the middling ratings of the public schools in the area, you've got yourself a livable slice of Orange County history.

READERS' CHOICE: OLD TOWNE ORRNGE

BEST CITY IN WHICH TO LIVE

Seal Beach

It may appear to be a sleepy beach town. but to residents, Seal Beach is a hotspot for good eats and drinks and has a surprisingly upbeat nightlife scene. And it's finally receiving the credit it's due with foodies, as newer restaurants (320 Main, Beachwood BBQ, Sushi Ryokan) plant roots near the center of town. From Main Street Wine Cellar to the handful of Irish pubs that lines Main Street, the nightlife can go

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GET THE BEST



vanessa castillo & yenni diaz



or the past five years, the most prominent progressive organization in Orange County hasn't been the local Democratic Party or even a union, but rather the Orange County Dream Team (OCDT), a group that advocates on behalf of undocumented students, which many OCDT members are. Group members have traveled to Sacramento and the halls of Congress, been arrested, spoken at debates, held workshops teaching undocumented students and their parents how to apply to colleges, and even publicly shamed Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez during an Orange County Labor Federation Dinner last year to co-sponsor a national DREAM Act that would grant amnesty to such students. All along the way, they have distinguished themselves not only through their deeds, but also their uniform: black T-shirts emblazoned with their clever take on California freeways' iconic illegal-immigrant crossing signs; instead of desperate people running across highway lanes, they feature students in their graduation robes and mortar boards, each clutching a diploma.

Helping to lead the charge are Vanessa Castillo and Yenni Diaz, both college graduates (Diaz from UC Irvine, Castillo from USC) who fell into the movement because of their shared experience as Mexican immigrants who grew up in the United States. "I can see that I could have been in the same position as any undocumented student," Diaz says. "Like stepping through a sliding door, my family could have missed the opportunity to adjust their status in this country in the 1980s, and I could have been a DREAM student."

Both are happy California Governor Jerry Brown recently signed into law bills that allow undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition, but they also stress that the OCDT's mission is far from over. The group continues to push for a national DREAM Act and serves as a gathering point where existing members can help other undocumented students navigate life in the United States. OCDT has also made alliances with other groups in the hope that a coalition will bolster their push toward the DREAM act. "The DREAM movement is important because it is the first time in a long time that a movement is led completely by undocumented students and allies," says Castillo. "We only want to help make this country better and stronger.

- Goodwill Store. When Castillo is not wearing her OCDT T-shirt, she's rocking threads found at this shop. "I love finding items to create colorful outfits," she says. 1800 N. Grand Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 352-7790; www.ocgoodwill.org.
- Golden West College Swap Meet. Castillo tries to go to this weekend flea market as much as possible. "It's the best place to find lost treasures, from records to accessories and clothes," she says. 15744 Goldenwest St., Huntington Beach, (714) 895-0888; www.goldenwestcollege.edu/swapmeet.

their high scores

- Sav-Mart Thrift Store. "The best deal to get a little something at a very cheap price," Diaz says. 2025 W. First St., Santa Ana, (714) 543-9280.
- El Malecon. This is essentially a licuados place that also sells Mexican snacks such as fruit salads and tostilocos. But what Castillo enjoys the most are the raspados, Mexico's take on shave ice. "They have the best diablitos," she says of the raspado topped with chile piquin, chamoy, cucumber, mango and jicama. 1708 S. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 571-0612.
- Reyna Market. It's a small neighborhood carnicería that serves as the home base for the Soho Taco gourmet-taco cart. Castillo does most of her grocery shopping there and enjoys the tacos as well. But what she recommends most are the homemade chips and salsa. "The chips are crispy and not burnt, while all of the salsas are hot, but not too much." 902 W. McFadden Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 549-1558.
- What used to be the Fiesta Market Place. Diaz has fond memories of "walking down Fourth Street and arriving at Fiesta Market Place, where families and community spent weekends together. I especially enjoyed the kiosk, where my little sister danced many times." That area, however, no longer exists, as developers have de-Mexicanized it, and Diaz refuses to return. Corner of Fourth and French streets, Santa Ana.
- Noche de Altares. It's the biggest Dia de los Muertos event in Orange County, and Diaz has helped as a volunteer for the past five years. "It's a place where, once a year, you get a taste of traditional *altares* with the modern culture that Santa Ana has created. A mix of a homeland and a new land in the heart of Santa Ana." nochedealtares.org.
- Bravo Night Club. Diaz loves this Latino nightclub in Anaheim "to go out dancing cumbia. It's where, if I want, I can go with only a few girlfriends or take the whole Santa Ana crew to have a great time dancing the night away." 1490 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 533-2291; www.clubbravo.com.

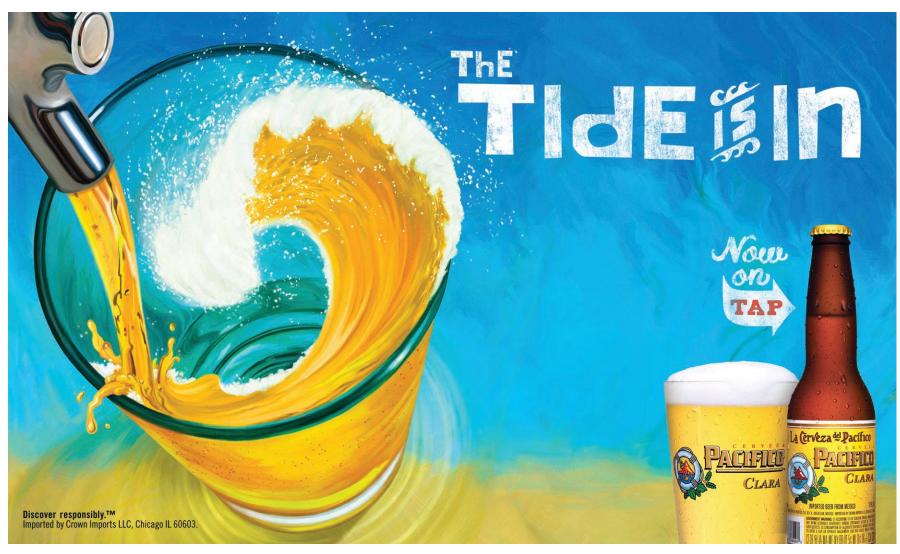
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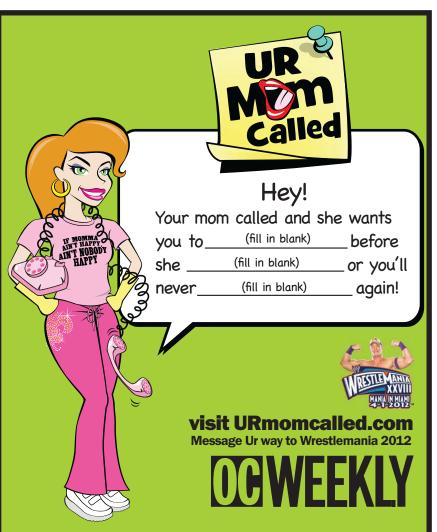
- El Centro Cultural de Mexico. It birthed the OC Dream Team and remains its home. It's "a second home where I have met some of my best friends, created a new family, and where I have experienced my culture away from Mexico full of music, art and cultura," says Diaz. Castillo agrees, adding, "This is where many great people, events and cultura happen and will continue to happen." facebook.com/elcentrocultural, el-centro.org.
- Favorite video-game characters: Castillo goes with Mario from the Super Mario Bros. series because "He was the first video-game character I was introduced to. My cousin was the first of us to have a Nintendo, so we would play all the time." Diaz, meanwhile, chooses Link, the protagonist of the Legend of Zelda saga. "I love all the mystery, the puzzle and exploring," she says. "Sounds like my life."

OCWEEKLY.COM











BEST REASON TO LIVE IN DRANGE COUNTY

Free Parking Everywhere!
Okay, so you have to pay for parking in the beach cities, as well as in some downtowns (for example, Santa Ana), but it's free to park at the mall. Which mall, you ask? EVERY mall! And you almost never have to pay to park on the street, overnight or for a couple of hours, with or without parking permits. For that reason alone, living in Orange County makes it a commuter's paradise, a total anomaly among the nation's metropolises.

BEST UNOFFICIAL CULTURAL DESTINATION THAT SHOULD BE OFFICIAL

Anaheim's 'Little Arabia' If Anaheim didn't take after State Assemblyman Allan Mansoor in failing to recognize its Arabic heritage, a sign reading, "Little Arabia" would beckon commuters to take the Brookhurst exit off Interstate 5. As it is now, for those in the know, a short drive from the off-ramp all the way to Katella Avenue reveals an array of great restaurants, hookah lounges, bakeries, clothing stores and ethnic markets that comprise the still-unofficial cultural destination that spans the Middle East: Persian produce, Jordanian dinners, Palestinian lunches, Armenian pastries, Lebanese sandwiches—and that's just the food. It would be shortsighted, however, to limit Little Arabia's vibrancy to the aromatic allure of its bakeries, restaurants and markets. Taking its cues from political developments abroad, it has been a rallying point for demonstrations, particularly during this year's Arab Spring. Closer to home, Anaheim City Council hopeful Bill Dalati launched his 2010 campaign bid from Brookhurst Plaza. If only those who were elected were as wise in understanding that the hummus is among us and that the Network of Arab-American Professionals' Orange County chapter's push to have the city officially designate Little Arabia is an important move in honoring an integral part of the community. twitter.com/littlearabia.

BEST PLACE FOR PEOPLE-WATCHING

The Camp

And by people, we mean incredibly hot yoga chicks who swarm the place at all

hours of the day, doing their stretching and breathing upstairs at the studio, then dining on microscopic lunches at Native Foods Café. The fun part is you can eat food that actually fills your belly at the East Borough Vietnamese sandwich joint, taco asylum, or Old Vine Café and still enjoy the view. Just watch out for the pesky Greenpeace activists who try to separate you from your green at the entrance. 2937 Bristol St., Costa Mesa; www.thecampsite.com.

BEST HOTEL

Shorebreak Hotel

Make no mistake: More luxe and lavish hotels exist in Orange County, ones with sateen linens and marble floors. But the Shorebreak wins bonus points for realizing some guests are more likely to need a place to store a surfboard than a truffle on the pillow. Part of the stylish Joie de Vivre family, this boutique hotel embraces its location-smack-dab in the heart of downtown Huntington Beach-and plays to the whole Surf City USA theme in a way that's fun and kitschy, never cheesy. It's a sweet haven for surfers, with conditions posted on a chalkboard next to the check-in counter, the Riptionary replacing the Bible in dresser drawers, and board rentals offered at the front desk. For everyone else, the experience is just as memorable. There are outdoor fire pits at which you can sit and roast marshmallows, as well as a "pet butler" service for those who've brought their furry friends. The ultra-modern rooms aren't too



If you ever have doubts about your collective or the safety of your medicine, look for the GOCCA logo - It's the sign of safety and knowledge in medical cannabis.

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shabby either, with stunning ocean views and amenities such as super-deep tubs and double showerheads. The only thing missing is a pool, but just across the street is the best one: the ocean.

500 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, (714) 861-4470; www.shorebreakhotel.com. READERS' CHOICE: MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH

BEST PLACE TO SPOT A LOCAL POWER BROKER

Any Angels Game

Are you dying to see Orange County's power brokers (and their sycophants) in person? Just go to any Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim game, whip out your binoculars in your crappy, upper-deck seats, and focus on the seats nearest to home plate. You'll see multimillionaire corporate executives, judges, labor-union bosses, FBI agents, nightclub owners, ex-professional athletes, trust-fund babies, Orange County Register columnists, prosecutors and, yes, even high-priced call girls.

BEST LEGAL EAGLES

UCI Law School Civil Rights Clinic Earlier this year, the School of Law at UC Irvine partnered with the Elk Grove-based California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) to develop a civil-rights clinic to train what Dean Erwin Chemerinsky calls "a new generation of civil-rights attorneys" to combat systemic discrimination, as well as to develop a pipeline for law students interested in future employment with the DFEH and related state agencies. "The department's partnership with UCI benefits students, businesses and consumers in the state," says Anna Caballero, secretary of California's State and Consumer Services Agency. During the academic year, UCI law students work on cases through DFEH, whose mission is to protect Californians from hate violence and unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. Just this past summer, UCI law students assisted with the investigation, prosecution and settlement of class and individual civil-rights complaints prompted by the DFEH's \$6 million classaction settlement against Verizon.

401 E. Peltason Dr., Ste. 1000, Irvine, (949) 824-0066: law.uci.edu.

BEST IDEA LAWYER

John D. Tran

Irvine-based lawyer John D. Tran can rightly claim a national reputation as an expert in patent law and we're not about to challenge that notion. Tran is a gifted attorney who can turn an inventor's gibberish into a potentially profitable, legally protected idea. Take, for example, the work he did for Victor Jasniy. Tran got this humdinger of a sentence approved for patent protection by federal officials: "A storage system generally comprising of one or more storage containers which form an array of storage containers for

storing items and which include at least four edges." You think that's good-a couple of years ago, he got a patent for the inventor of a nicotine-loaded toothpick.

BEST DUOTE

Justice Eileen C. Moore "The existence of nonhumans in human bodies is . . . not a rational defense." California Court of Appeal Justice Eileen Moore, a Governor Gray Davis appointee, was reflecting on a defense by Michael Craig Murdoch, a 50-year-old criminal defendant who argued he couldn't be convicted of assault because the thing he attacked was an alien, not a human being, and all the witnesses against him were Sodom and Gomorrah natives.

BEST VETERANS RSSISTANCE

Orange County Veterans Employment Committee

Former soldiers and other service people from this country's various overseas military entanglements (three . . . that we know of ... heh-heh) are turning up at alarming rates in the streets, soup-kitchen lines and substandard housing. After fighting for America, they return to fight for their lives. Fortunately, the nonprofit Orange County Veterans Employment Committee (OCVEC) helps connect returning (or longreturned) U.S. veterans with the resources available for them. Among other things, it has teamed with the state Employment Development Department for job fairs for vets. Besides getting former military personnel to its events, OCVEC has made sure potential employers and service providers are there to greet them. Now here's a mission everyone can get behind: teaching veterans what it takes to meet their education and career goals, as well as informing potential schools and employers why they should include our heroes in their ranks. OCVEC points clients to existing job centers with veterans representatives in Irvine, Anaheim, Santa Ana, Buena Park and Westminster.

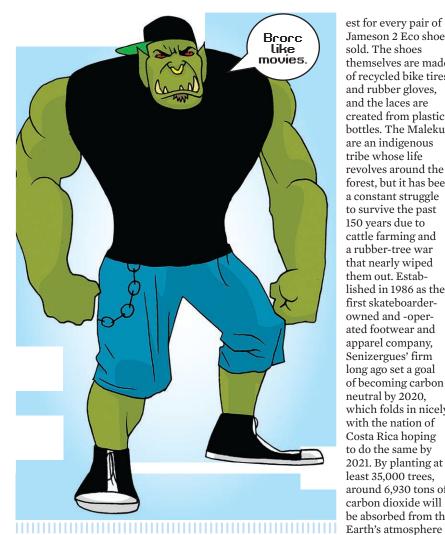
ocvec.org.

BEST CHARITY Age Well Senior Services

For more than 30 years, Laguna Woodsbased Age Well Senior Services has lovingly provided assistance-meals on wheels, health services and social events-for our needy elderly citizens. How many people benefit? Last year alone, the nonprofit aided 63,000 seniors. Since 2008, it has delivered almost 900,000 meals. Shelli Mire, who helps deliver the meals, says the recipients, who are often alone, "just light up" when they get visits. We also like that this 501(c)3 charity-it's not government-frequently arranges for local middle-school students to help. That's a win-win situation. The

24300 El Toro Rd., Ste. A-2000, Laguna Woods, (949) 855-8033; www.myagewell.org.

elderly get some companionship, and the



BEST CHORUS

Men Alive

Composer Rich Cook, the founder of Orange County's Men Alive chorus, once worked as music director for the Reverend Pat Robertson of Christian Broadcasting Network fame and for the televangelists at Trinity Broadcasting Network, neither of which would have been elated if Cook had openly declared his sexuality while in its employment. About 10 years ago, while living in Laguna Beach, Cook created this gay men's chorus, which has grown from 13 singers to 130. But more important, Cook's dream of serving as goodwill ambassador for the local gay community has worked. His upbeat group are now a well-respected musical operation who perform at the county's largest venues and have included participation by Debbie Reynolds, Michael Feinstein, Sam Harris and Bernadette Peters.

www.menalivechorus.org

BEST CORPORATE DO-GOODER

Pierre-André Senizergues The pro skater-turned-CEO of Sole Technology-owner of etnies, Emerica, and other shoe and apparel brandsdecided to celebrate his Lake Forestbased concern's 25th anniversary not with cake, champagne and party favors, but trees-35,000 of them, to be exact. That's how many Pierre-André Senizergues is on track to plant this year on the Maleku reserve in northern Costa Rica. Working with the nonprofit La Reserva Forest Foundation, Sole Technology has planted one tree in the new etnies rainforest for every pair of Jameson 2 Eco shoes sold. The shoes themselves are made of recycled bike tires and rubber gloves, and the laces are created from plastic bottles. The Maleku are an indigenous tribe whose life revolves around the forest, but it has been a constant struggle to survive the past 150 years due to cattle farming and a rubber-tree war that nearly wiped them out. Established in 1986 as the first skateboarderowned and -operated footwear and apparel company, Senizergues' firm long ago set a goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2020. which folds in nicely with the nation of Costa Rica hoping to do the same by 2021. By planting at least 35,000 trees, around 6,930 tons of carbon dioxide will be absorbed from the

throughout the trees' lifetime; the "Buy a Shoe, Plant a Tree Project" video at etnies' website explains more.

Sole Technology, 20162 Windrow Dr., Lake Forest, (949) 460-2020; www.soletechnology. com, www.etnies.com.

BEST UNSUCCESSFUL RTTEMPT RT CHARITY

Frank Mickadeit and David Whiting Orange County Register columnists Frank Mickadeit and David Whiting trained to box in Costa Mesa for six weeks and were scheduled to go three rounds against each other with all of the proceeds going to local charities. Indeed, Mickadeit and Whiting, with the help of Barbara Venezia, another Reg columnist, raised more than \$10,000 for the "Clash of the Columnists" bout. But on the eve of the fight, the paper's management refused to answer the bell. They decided to block the event because of worries over potential insurance claims against the paper. Good for Whiting and Mickadeit anyway.

BEST FESTIVAL

Newport Beach Film Festival The loss of the main venue had matters looking dire heading into this year's Newport Beach Film Festival (NBFF), but organizers not only pulled off the 12th annual run in April, but they presented another intriguing blend of interesting films, blow-out parties and enlightening seminars that solidified the fest's reputation as one of Orange County's top cultural events. The diverse collection of studio, independent and international films festival-goers have seen before general release over the years includes Crash, Dogtown and Z-Boys, Dust to Glory,

kids get an important life lesson.







Layer Cake, Sexy Beast, The Cove, and Spellbound. The festival is also all about educating Orange County movie-lovers, from novices and cinephiles, through post-screening Q&As with filmmakers and free screenwriter seminars. It's not unusual to find actors, directors and screenwriters in the audience next to you, lapping up the knowledge. The learning continues during non-festival weeks through the NBFF-sponsored Orange County Film Society or its partnership with Orange County Museum of Art and Sage Hill High School. Over the years, the festival's red carpet has drawn Adam Sandler, Andy Garcia, Michael C. Hall, Peter Fonda, Newport Beach's own McG, Will Ferrell and the Real Housewives of Orange County. One party during the 2011 run even featured a drunken Andy Dick peeing all over everything. Match that, Segerstrom Center!

4540 Campus Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 253-2880; www.newportbeachfilmfest.com.

BEST NEWSCASTER

David Goldstein

David Goldstein is the modern-day Mike Wallace, the hard-charging journalist who made 60 Minutes famous for CBS after finding crooks, poking microphones in their faces and asking devastating questions. During his long, accomplished career, Goldstein has uncovered a nearendless supply of lazy bureaucrats, cheating elected officials, nutty government programs and corporate crooks. But his August confrontation with Los Angeles City Commissioner Albert Abrams remains at the forefront of our minds. Having been caught by the FBI collecting child porn, Abrams was the proverbial deer in the headlights when KCBS-TV's Goldstein confronted him and secured an all-time priceless explanation. According to Abrams, he is innocent because a spinal tumor created within his mind a second personality that was a pedophile who liked to see 4-yearold boys in sexual positions. Goldstein's incredulous expression said it all.

READERS' CHOICE:
JILLIAN REYNOLDS

BEST CELEBRITY

Casey Anthony

The lovely young Casey Anthony, who was found not guilty of murdering her daughter and covering up the crime, grew up in the other Orange County—the one in Florida—but where did she come as soon as the jury handed her freedom? Reportedly, right here, the land of John Wayne! Fortunately for us, she only landed at John Wayne Airport in order to make her way to the 909, but given our wet-foot/dry-foot policy, she's officially one of us now. A scary thought for scary times. . . .

BEST RADIO PERSONALITY

Scott Aukerman

Born in Savannah, Georgia, Scott Aukerman grew up in Orange County, where

he attended Cypress High School and, like Glee's Matthew Morrison, Orange County High School of the Arts when it was on the campus of Los Alamitos High School. Aukerman also knocked around in a band with No Doubt's Adrian Young and met his writing partner B.J. Porter at Orange Coast College, where they started a radio show called Lutz Radio. Aukerman went on to become the ultimate Hollywood comedy insider: indemand puncher-upper of TV and movie scripts; Emmy-nominated producer of HBO's Mr. Show With Bob and David; 2009 MTV Movie Awards head writer who broke the news via Tumblr that the Eminem-Bruno incident was staged; director of Zach Galifianakis' hilarious Between Two Ferns interviews on Funny-OrDie.com; and host of Comedy Death-Ray interviews with the likes of Judd Apatow, Ben Stiller and Seth Rogan that are shown as bumpers between IFC-"rescued" reruns of Mr. Show, Arrested Development, The Ben Stiller Show, The Larry Sanders Show, and Apatow's Undeclared and Freaks and Geeks. Aukerman has also maintained his love of aural "theater of the mind" by co-founding Earwolf Studios, which presents regular weekly podcasts by his standup and alternative comedy pals, as well as by hosting his own Comedy Bang! Bang! Podcast (formerly Comedy Death-Ray). With the likes of Sarah Silverman, Patton Oswalt and Jon Hamm dropping in, Aukerman conducts bizarre interviews and runs guests through deliciously pointless aural improvisation exercises. Routinely, a Matt Besser of Upright Citizens Brigade or Paul F. Tompkins of a million things (from Mr. Show to Tenacious D. to his own The Pod F. Tomkast) arrive unannounced and in a character who quickly gets under everyone's skin. Everyone, that is, except us listeners, who love it. Comedy Bang! Bang! Podcast and other Earwolf Studios programs are available via earwolf.com and external digital (iTunes, Zune) or mobile (iPhone App, Android App on the way, iPod, iPad, mp3 players) platforms.

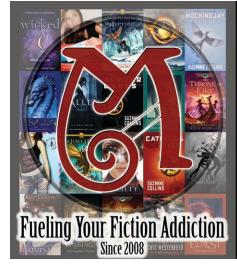
earwolf.com/show/comedy-bang-bang-podcast; comedydeathray.com.

READERS' CHOICE: KEVIN & BEAN

BEST RADIO STATION

KUSC-FM 91.5

It's no newsflash that the arts are being eradicated by corporate-driven commercialism and tabloid sensationalism, and thus, big props go to the only surviving commercial-free classical-music station in Southern California. Of course, it has to be nonprofit and listener-sponsored, and while it's fun to hate on the rich, they're usually the ones who send money and don't eavesdrop for free. Every day at KUSC is filled with enriching, important and life-altering music created by some of the greatest artists in history. Especially grand are the Sunday programs Baroque and Beyond,



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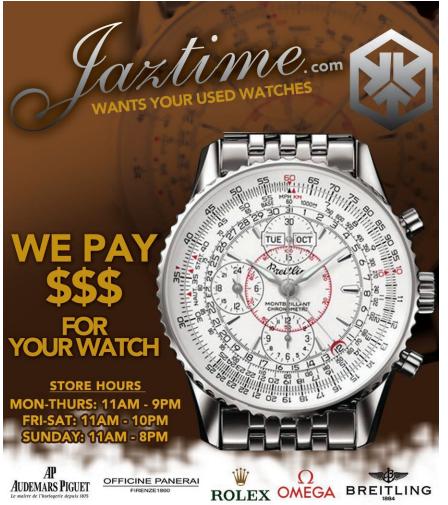
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which reminds us of the gentleness and genius of Bach, and *Soul Music*, featuring the most moving chorale music ever recorded. It's the only place that would dream of broadcasting two hours of operas written for African-American casts or, as in the show *From the Top*, feature performances by the youngest, most talented musicians on the planet. Besides all of that, there is truly no sexier female voice on radio than host Kimberlea Daggy. Just. Like. Butta. www.kusc.org.

READERS' CHOICE: KROQ-FM 106.7

BEST NEWSPRPER REPORTER

Jeff Gottlieb

A few years back, Jeff Gottlieb resigned his job as an editor with the OC bureau of the Los Angeles Times to become one of only two writers covering the South Bay, which is how he and colleague Ruben Vives managed to uncover the massive corruption going on at city hall in Bell, a sordid tale of secret raises and bonuses for officials who ran the town like their own 401(k) plan. Like any good crime story, it even came complete with its own arch-villain, the almost cartoonishly obese city manager and Huntington Beach resident Robert Rizzo. Thanks to Gottlieb and Vives, the Times won a rare headline that didn't involve layoffs this past year: the much-coveted Pulitzer Prize for public service.

BEST TELEVISON STATION

PBS SoCal

Now that KCET has dropped its PBS programming in favor of awkwardly dubbed Japanese news, Al Jazeera broadcasts and primetime British crime dramas, PBS SoCal (forever known as KOCE-TV) is the only place where you can find vital programming such as Frontline, POV and Independent Lens, as well as perennial favorites such as The American Experience, Great Performances and Austin City Limits. If you want to watch local talking heads scour Orange County's political landscape for divisive commentary, there's Real Orange and Inside OC With Rick Reiff. Consider it the last stand of boob-tube high culture inside OC.

READERS' CHOICE: FOX-KTTV 11

BEST USE OF OLD-SCHOOL BIKINI PHOTOS

Ghetto Juice Magazine

And you thought high-hipped, brightly colored bikinis were out! (Okay, they absolutely are.) For the publishers of the year-old, OC-centric surf magazine *Ghetto Juice*, nostalgia is a powerful driving force. Well, it's not exactly nostalgia; it's just representative of the era when the magazine was first in circulation. After a near-two-decade hiatus, it's back

and building a readership. Every month,

a stack appears at coffee and surf shops from San Clemente to Huntington Beach, free to whomever wants one, and the demand seems to be increasing because copies are becoming harder to come by. The one constant with each issue (if an issue can be obtained) is the guarantee of T&A just a few spreads in. Sometimes it's a photo from bikini contests at the Op Pro or photo shoots on the Huntington Beach Pier, always taken by the same photographer, a lensman who goes by the name Hank Foto. Just eight issues into its second existence—run by co-publishers Skip Snead and Joe McElroy-the bootytastic imagery has become a trademark of its reincarnation.

BEST BLOG

Friends for Fullerton's Future Yes, we named this feisty blog-whose world begins and ends within the Fullerton city limits—as the best blog last year, but while the major OC political blogs have imploded into irrelevancy with infighting, lawsuits, hackery and neglect, Friends for Fullerton's Future has not only continued its muckraking, name-calling genius, but it has also broke many important stories, most crucially the Kelly Thomas death-bycop scandal. A schizophrenic transient, Thomas was beaten by six police officers in July and died afterward-and it was Friends for Fullerton's Future that posted the horrific picture of what the bloodied, bruised, destroyed man and found videotape showing a distressed Thomas being tased multiple times, photo and video that soon made headlines across the world. Started by Fullerton property owner Tony Bushala and featuring a cast of contributors that ranges from political activists to, um, the dead dog of former Fullerton councilwoman Jan Flory, it's essential reading for anyone interested in the North County city—or great investigative reporting in general.

WWW.fullertonsfuture.org. READERS' CHOICE: I HEART OLD TOWNE DRANGE

BEST WEATHERCASTER

Fritz Coleman

As our local television stations continue the trend toward younger, more-buxom weathercasters at the expense of the men who dominated the field during the 1980s and '90s, KNBC-TV Channel 4's Fritz Coleman stands above the fray, not just as the wizened veteran of the bunch, but also as someone who does everything a weathercaster should do: give the forecast, banter with the anchors (a nod toward his days as a standup comic), plug his many charitable appearances and appear to be genuinely enjoying it all—all this without an impressive decolletage! He's been doing it for 27 years and will still beat the hot chicks following in his trail 27 years later.

READERS' CHOICE: DALLAS RAINES

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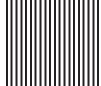
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BEST TRAFFIC REPORTER

Alusha Del Valle

Nothing says rise and shine like Sig Alerts, chronic congestion on Interstate 5 toward LA and 91 East gridlock heading into OC. Fortunately, navigating the ins-and-outs of Southern California's weekday rat race is KABC-TV Channel 7 Morning News traffic reporter Alysha Del Valle. If her name and voice sound familiar, it's because she has made the media rounds over the years, originally giving commuters the good, the bad and the ugly of their daily grinds on comedian George Lopez's now-long-defunct LA-based morning radio show. In addition, Del Valle, an honors graduate from USC with a degree in communication, has hosted on SiTV's The Drop and LATV's Late Night, as well as working with Rick Dees and Ryan Seacrest on the airwaves. Now firmly situated in the Morning News team, she comes equipped with live Caltrans camera shots, traffic-tracker drive times and maps showing the intravenous freeway systems of the Southland in their various red, yellow and green states to help you get to your destination. From time to time, Del Valle also produces segments on local restaurants and the likes to mix it up. Hopefully, one day, we'll see her in the news-anchor chair, but for now, bad traffic has never looked so good in the morning time.

BEST LOCAL PUBLIC-AFFAIRS TV SHOW

Inside OC With Rick Reiff

Even though Congressman Dana Rohrabacher wore what appeared to be a suit jacket made of cheap, industrial, gray carpet, his late-August appearance on Inside OC With Rick Reiff on SoCal PBS was a prime example of the value of the show. For eons, Rohrabacher has paraded himself as an opponent of bloated, wasteful spending-rants that most often coincide with Democratic occupancy of the White House. But the Costa Mesa Republican voted to spend an extra \$2.5 billion for C-17 military cargo planes that the Pentagon insisted it did not need. Reiff, who doesn't hide his own conservatism, pressed the congressman for an explanation. He even wondered aloud if Rohrabacher championed this pork spending because the recipient of the deal would be Boeing, which is based in the congressman's district. Nope, replied Rohrabacher, who has no military experience. He argued that spending the extra money on unneeded aircraft actually saves taxpayers money. Reiff didn't take that answer lightlyanother great interview for the head of the Orange County Business Journal whose show might be the only place in Orange County where Democrats and Republicans can take each other's positions and not get lampooned mercilessly for their double standards.

BEST NON-PRESCRIPTION METHOD TO INDUCE SLEEP

Watch Dialogue With Doti and Dodge

The last time we channel-surfed and saw Dialogue With Doti and Dodge on SoCal PBS, Chapman University's head honcho Jim Doti couldn't even pretend his talk show was interesting. Doti had slid down in his chair, used a fist to hold his head up and seemed on the verge of closing his eyes and falling asleep while one of his guests blabbed on in a tryptophaninducing monotone about nothing. Doti is not a bore at all—just see how much money he's raised for Chapman in his long reign as president—so here's to hoping Doti and his TV partner, Chapman trustee Kristina Dodge, act more excited than mere smiles.

BEST TWITTER PERSONALITY

Erica Hosseini

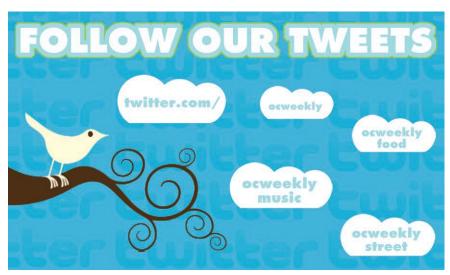
In 140 characters or less, the Weekly's onetime sexy cover girl Erica Hosseini knows how to keep her Twitter followers entertained. The Newport Beach local has quite a lot of material to draw from, considering she dabbles in quite a number of industries. Though she made her name as a professional surfer, her good looks and poise in front of a camera have led to modeling opportunities, hosting a segment on Fuel TV and a stunt-double gig on the new incarnation of Beverly Hills, 90210. When she's not commenting on the general surf population in and around OC, she's posting photos of her travels, her sponsor hook-ups, surf-industry parties and, uh, herself (score!). twitter.com/ericahosseini.

BEST SPORTSCASTER

Beto Duran

Sports fans like to feel like they're on the inside. Beto Duran, a reporter with ESPN Radio, actually is on the inside. He hangs out in the clubhouse, at practices and in the locker room after games, mainly covering the Southland's favorite basketball team, the Los Angeles Lakers. While most any reporter who has risen to the ranks of the four-letter sports empire is accomplished, Duran's reports typically come with tidbits that the other guys missed, the most famous of which was his 2007 interview with then-USC, now-New York Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez in the locker room after a game with Notre Dame. Others in the media were treating Sanchez's decision to wear a mouthpiece with the colors of the Mexican flag as sedition; Duran, instead, asked Sanchez his reasoning, which he did plainly and brilliantly. Max Kellerman, host of Max & Marcellus on ESPN-AM 710, works with Duran during the NBA season and has frequently referred to him as one of the best in the business.

READERS' CHOICE: VIN SCULLY









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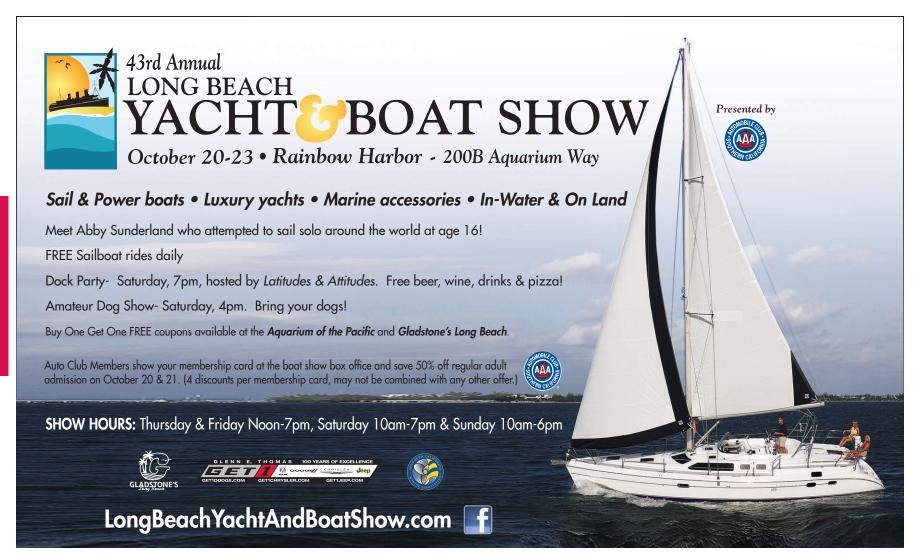
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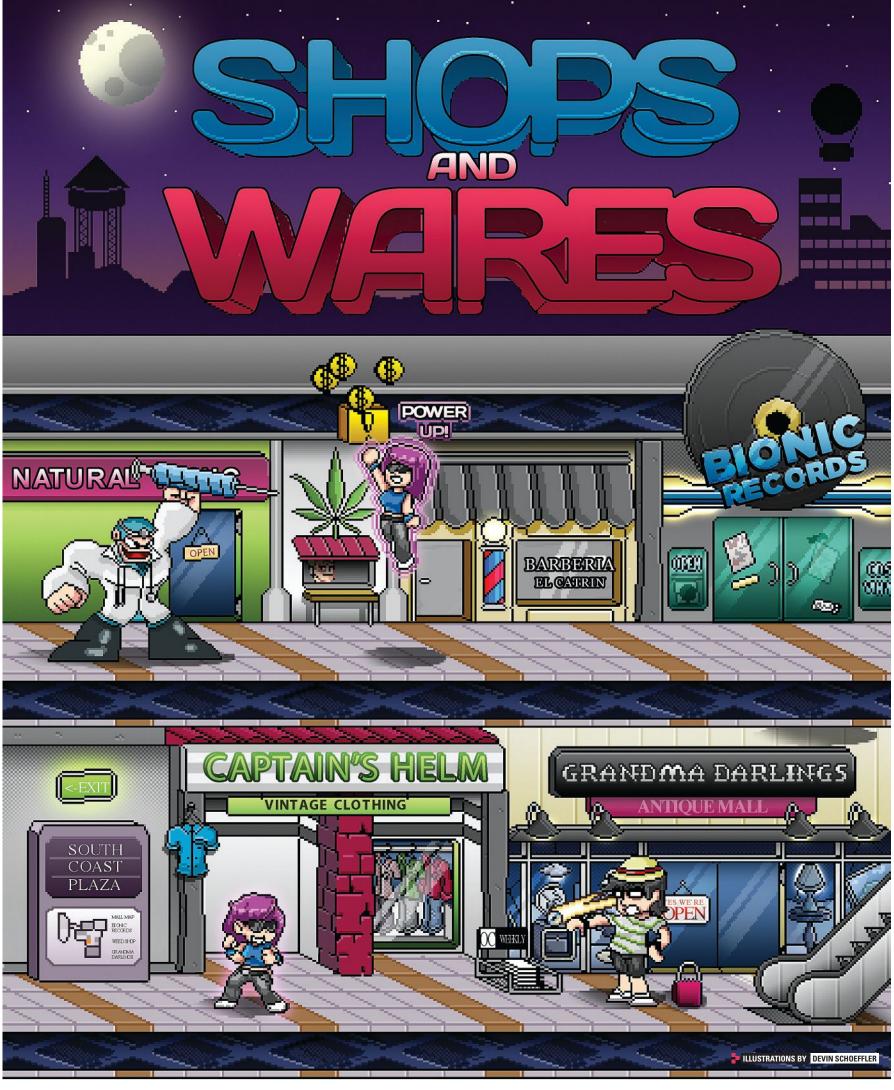
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Best trend

Nostalgia For the 190s

Hope you held onto those Donnie Wahlberg posters: Another decade from the past has become all cool and retro, and this time, it's the 1990s (la vida loca?). Eighties nostalgia is so 10 years ago. It seems like everyone has jumped in on the craze. MTV brought back Beavis and Butt-head and—get this—music videos. The Backstreet Boys and New Kids On the Block got back together to perform for swarms of once-tweens (Justin who?). Newt Gingrich has considered a presidential run. Teen witches replaced teen vampires. Christina Applegate is still hot. It's easy, we suppose, to long for the days when the now-legal, pouty Olsen twins chirped adorable one-liners ("You got it, dude!"), and the only terrorists we worried about were dinosaurs destroying theme parks. Yes, we love the '90s! Now, if only we can bring back the Clinton-era economy and Metropolis in Irvine....

BEST MALL

South Coast Plaza

Sometimes, you just have to go with the obvious. If you're gonna go to the mall, you might as well go to the mall, the holy grail of Orange County consumerism, the reason why the words "Costa Mesa" sit beside Beverly Hills, Paris and Milan in designer ads in glossy magazines. It's a place where a concierge will check your bags when your arms get too tired, where personal shoppers are at your service (for a fee, of course), where your electric Jaguar can juice up at the charging station while you shop. Even if you're more, well, recession-chic like us, it's always fun to play Pretty Woman, dressing up (yeah, you've gotta dress up) and prancing around the fancy cluster of shops: Prada, Burberry, Armani, Gucci, La Perla, Hermès, Versace and Chloé. The 2.8 million-square-foot complex houses all the usual mall stores, too, including H&M, Banana Republic and Nine West, as well as the major department stores and a list of eateries from acclaimed gourmet to fast food. Shopping has never looked this good. 3333 S. Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 435-

2000: www.southcoastplaza.com. READERS' CHOICE: SOUTH CORST PLAZA

BEST VINTAGE STORE

Captain's Helm

Located in a former auto garage, the Captain's Helm exudes hipster chic, yet it skews more thrift store than vintage store. There's a nice selection of graphic tees and polo shirts, some with interesting graphics such as Reagan's face twisted in all sorts of grotesque contortions accompanied by nasty, lovable captions; these run anywhere from \$8 to \$12. And don't miss the selection of Captain's Helm

T-shirts featuring obligatory line drawings of a crusty rowboat guy. Included in the mix are shoes, boots and jeans, as well asbizarrely-surfboards. And like any forward-thinking secondhand store, there's also a sizable collection of used vinyl. All of which gives the savvy shopper plenty of reasons to check this spot out.

2145 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, (949) 646-4356; www.captainshelm.com. READERS' CHOICE: BUFFALO EXCHANGE

BEST GREEN DEPARTMENT STORE

Seed People's Market

This place offers nearly all the creature comforts the eco-conscious soul could desire, except for organic produce. Like a subspace passage to Portland, Seed People's Market touts "products with a purpose" and carries countless handmade and recycled items arranged artfully about the shop on whimsical art-installation-like displays. The result resembles a miniature Patchwork Festival operating seven days a week. You'd be hard-pressed to find another establishment in Orange County from which you can walk away with Patagonia outerwear, a package of handprinted stationery and a pair of decorative bear-eared headbands. Nestled in the heart of the Camp in Costa Mesa, not only does the store offer an array of guilt-free gift-worthy items, but it also has a café and a second-floor crafting studio, with regularly scheduled classes. So if you're feeling particularly productive, you could roll over to Seed, get your birthday shopping done, learn how to repurpose old copper wire into a new birdhouse, grab some coffee and wrap up by chilling out on the patio while shooting the shit next to a campfire. 2937 Bristol St., Ste. C101, Costa Mesa, (714) 708-2277; www.seedpeoplesmarket.com.

BEST PLACE TO BUY SOMETHING CUTE (THOUGH COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY)

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In the SoCo Corner off Interstate 405 is the home-decorating behemoth known simply as tpt home, pleasing shoppers and infuriating the grammar police. The year-old shop is the size of a giant warehouse—one entire wing is dedicated to fake flowers and faux topiary (look no further to satisfy those artificial-Christmas-tree needs). Calling itself "Orange County's destination for inspired home décor," tpt definitely has an OC aesthetic and is perfect for those Newport Beach residents who had to fire their interior decorator when the market crashed. Any knickknack can be found—need some colored glass balls to finish off the table setting? Maybe an assortment of tin bud vases? A sequined bird statue? Yep, all can be found here.

3305 Hyland Ave., Costa Mesa, (657) 269-5595; www.tpt-home.com.

Burke Williams

BEST ANTIQUE SHOP

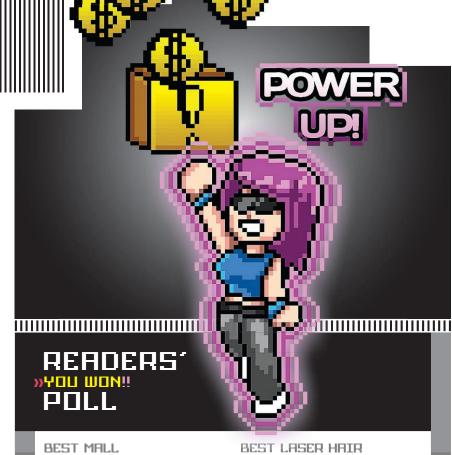
Grandma Darlings Antique Mall This mall houses about 80 different booths and rented spaces of antiques ranging from vintage clothing and furniture to kitchenware and estate jewelry. If you're looking for an oddball collector's item from early last century, this is a fantastic place to start. There are gorgeous-but-very-un-PC fur coats, sunglasses, tin signs, furniture—and damn, that's a lot of Barbie dolls. The quality of items is exceptional! With 10,000 square feet of space, this old-stuff wonderland is a perfect way to spend an afternoon, wandering around looking for that quirky treasure you never knew you totally needed. Plus, it's called Grandma Darlings, which is absolutely adorable. 1819 Redondo Ave., Long Beach, (866) 974Call it hoarding with style. Shoppers at

Otto tend to need things, lots and lots of things. They can't help it. The things at this cozy art-and-design promised land in downtown Fullerton are unique, inspiring and just plain rad. Take, for instance, the designer-coveted George Nelson bubble lamps and Ole Flensted mobiles dripping from the ceiling, or the pop surrealist prints by Tim Biskup and Jason Freeny blaring on the walls. Every nook and cranny bursts with zany. conversation-triggering goods-colorful Tokidoki tovs, Gama-Go wallets, those strange-but-cool Uglydoll plushies, a rubber-chicken handbag-all curated by OC style-setters Mike and Pam Atta (who

111 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-3142; www.shopotto.com.

door, Out of Vogue).

also own the vintage furniture shop next



South Coast Plaza BEST VINTAGE STORE Buffalo Exchange BEST USED-BOOK STORE Camelot Books BEST VIDEO-GRME STORE Games 4 U BEST COMIC-BOOK STORE **Comics Unlimited** BEST LIQUOR STORE Hi-Time Wine Cellars BEST RECORD/ CD STORE Second Spin BEST SPA

PEDICURE Happy Nails BEST TATTOO PARLOR **Outer Limits Tattoo** BEST PLACE TO GET PIERCED Electric Chair Tattoo BEST WAY TO GET A PET Stella's Hope BEST SEX SHOP **Condom Revolution**

BEST MANICURE-

Jack's Surf Shop

BEST SURF SHOP

REMOVAL

Dr. Tattoff

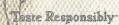
7943; www.grandmadarlingsantiquemall.net.





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Worldwide Video Long Beach 1974 - 1999

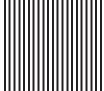


October 7, 2011 through February 12, 2012



2300 East Ocean Blvd. Long Beach, CA 90803 Phone: 562-439-2119









Kitchen Land

If you've ever resided in a college dorm, you know how it feels to live in a space so small you can't undress two at a time without worrying about making accidental ass-to-ass contact. If you just so happen to have also set foot in an apartment in East Asia, you know the experience is not much different. However, if there's one thing the Asian design has over the U.S., it's space-saving efficiency. Kitchen Land, nestled deep in the heart of Garden Grove's Little Seoul, is an obscure supply shop neatly brimming with an array of adorably colored, stackable, sleekly fashioned household wares to help you make the most of your broke-ass living situation. Once past the threshold, you'll be greeted by an electronic "Thank you for coming!" Then you're slammed by a tidal wave of stuff, including (but not limited to) indoor slippers, exfoliating towels, sake serving sets, cutlery, rice cookers, condiment containers and \$2 straw brooms that will put your dust-buster to shame. If price is an issue and customer service isn't (expect to encounter limited English), forget Mitsuwa and explore the nether-regions of Kitchen Land for some great deals on cute appliances with amazingly high utility.

9580 Garden Grove Blvd., Ste. 110, Garden Grove, (714) 539-8860.

BEST USED-BOOK STORE

(open) Books

With its concrete floors and 2-inch-by-4-inch latticed ceiling, {open} Books has the lofty urban charm of its vinyl-store neighbor Fingerprints, as well as a comparable hipness quotient. The front fover hosts a vintage Remington typewriter and vintage miniature TV sets, and a fixedgear bicycle hangs from the rafters. We'll forgive the store the last one, reminding ourselves of its cool selection of books and live events. Shoppers are immediately greeted with some top-notch alternative titles, such as Pole Dancing to Gospel Hymns, a collection of poems by Andrea Gibson exploring the world of a wounded soldier. There's also a small cart holding budget titles, with one book available for \$1 or 3 for \$2. What sets {open} apart from many other bookstores is its eye for talent and desire to give voice to local artists by turning the store into a de facto gallery. A recent installation included the works of Suzanne Walsh, whose preferred medium is wood. The shop also serves as venue for the likes of Vacuum Bell singer Will Morrison.

2226 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 499-6736; www.thestoryofopen.com. READERS' CHOICE: CAMELOT BOOKS

Sometimes, there's a real upside to the march of technology having nothing to do with the advancements themselves. Take the evolution of cameras. With digital now the reigning mode of photographic arts, there's a wealth of old-time cameras available for a good price. And the images they produce are every bit as good, if not better, than what digital offers. Thankfully, there are places such as Fullerton Cameras to collect a respectable, dust-free inventory of film cameras and accessories and offer solid counsel on their maintenance, use and repair. Having trouble finding someone to work on your medium-format Mamiya C330? The guys at the used-camera store will know what to do. Located near Fullerton College, this spot offers a 10 percent student discount on certain items. They also rent a wide array of Nikon and Canon lenses and sell lots of state-of-the-art digital products. 809 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 441-2443;

www.fullertoncameras.com.

BEST MOM-AND-POP GUITAR SHOP

Rockit Music

The problem with shopping at a bigbox music-instrument retailer happens when, within three minutes of grabbing your dream axe from the wall display and strumming a few licks, you're pounced on by a salivating floorman who immediately refers to you as "bro." As in "I see you got your eye on that axe, bro." The beauty of shopping at a spot such as Rockit Music is it's devoid of a high-pressure sales crew. It's stocked with tons of musical goodies focusing on Fender and Gibson electrics, as well as Fender and Mesa Boogie amps and a large selection of acoustic guitars. Operated by a core group of guys with more than a century of combined musical experience and run by the same owner for the past two decades, it also has a diverse range of drum, bass and guitar teachers capable of taking students in any direction they want to go. Best of all, they shred. 1039 E. Imperial Hwy., Ste. F1, Brea, (714) 674-0640; www.rockitmusic.com.

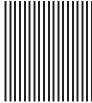
BEST UKULELE STORE

Island Bazaar

On the outside, it's a nondescript, creamcolored industrial-park suite. On the inside: a uke-topia, complete with bamboo stalks and fake plants. More ukuleles than vou ever knew existed line the walls of this Hawaiian-themed shop. Even ukulele experts would be hard-pressed to name an existing uke-related item the store doesn't carry. Ukulele books? Check. Cases? Check. Note cards, Hawaiian leis and other kitsch? Check, check and check. Whether you're a rookie or a pro, Island Bazaar is your place. The ukes range in quality and price, starting at \$50 and peak-







ing around \$3,000. The staff are friendly and helpful; as it says on the website, "If we know you are dropping in, we would love to make a fuss over you." But if you tell the salespeople you're just looking, they'll leave you alone and head back to the task at hand-strumming. Aside from selling ukuleles, Island Bazaar also offers lessons and several jam sessions every week. Beginners can learn on Wednesday nights. Then on Fridays, the Surf City Strummers work on a new play list each week and boast the best snacks of all the uke groups. If you stick around all day, and it's the last Friday of the month, you can play along during gospel night. It even sets up concerts by ukulele greats-musicians have traveled from Hawaii and Canada to play at the shop-and charges just 20 bucks. Oh, yeah, and don't forget to grab an "EvolUKEtion" T-shirt on the way out. 16582 Gothard St., Ste. R, Huntington Beach, (714) 843-9350; www.ukuleleparadise.com.

BEST VIDEO-GAME STORE

Gameplay

It's a shame that there are fewer and fewer stores like Gameplay. It's the perfect example of what a great video-game store is about—a huge supply of old and new games, knowledgeable employees who love their work, and great prices. Located next to a nail salon in a Long Beach strip mall, Gameplay is a gaming geek's vision of what paradise would be—a place far, far away from popular chain stores that stock only the newest games at retail prices. It's the diverse selection and merchandise that truly sets Gameplay apart from any other boring video-game store. Cramming the space from floor to ceiling is a wide assortment of video games from multiple generations, ranging from the cartridges of the NES days to the most obscure 3DO titles. Not only does it stock older games that are unavailable just about anywhere other than eBay, but it also carries the latest Japaneseimport and rare video games. Also in stock are random game-related figures, stuffed toys, movies, anime, even gaming-branded packaged food. Where else can you purchase a new game and a Mega Man energy drink under one roof? Gameplay's a fighter when it comes to pricing games; most of the new releases fall \$4 to \$5 below the suggested retail price. If that isn't cheap enough for you, it'll even price-match local competitors without any hassle. More important, Gameplay's staff include some of the greatest in customer service. The employees are true fans of video gaming who know their hobby inside and out and will provide honest opinions.

5911 E. Spring St., Long Beach, (562) 421-6880. READERS' CHOICE: GAMES 4 U

BEST COMIC-BOOK STORE

Alakazam! Comics

OCWEEKLY.COM

You better know your Justice League from your League of Extraordinary Gen-

tlemen if you're a comic-book store opening near a university, and that's exactly what Marco Davanzo did when opening Alakazam! across the street from UC Irvine, his alma mater and a school that probably has more geeks per capita than any college in the country—outside of Caltech, that is. Davanzo is now behindthe-scenes, but his staff can rattle off the most obscure references while arguing the merits of the latest X-Men film adaptation. The classics-DC, Marvel, Frank Miller, Alan Moore, Katsuhiro Otomo (of Akira fame, just one of hundreds of mangas in stock)—line the shelves, alongside such family-friendly items as the latest Simpsons and Archie comics, boxes of archives, and larger, more scholarly books ranging in subject matter from the Yellow Kid to collected interviews with Stan Lee. They'll even manage your subscriptions for you at no cost. The store hasn't been immune to the changing nature of book publishing-its Costa Mesa outpost closed in 2008-but Davanzo's focus is on preserving the comic-book store experience that's slowly slipping away.

4237 Campus Dr., Šte. B162, Irvine, (949) 854-3744; www.alakazamcomics.com. REHDERS' CHOICE:

COMICS UNLIMITED

BEST HARDWARE STORE

Woodward's Ace Hardware Don't get misled by the name: Woodward's has an affiliation with the hardware megachain, but the sprawling Santa Ana shop is firmly under the control of Bill Woodward, who has run the store for decades. In addition to stocking the usual things hardware stores stock-doors, plants, soil, paint and the like—it also offers items specific to the tract homes in the surrounding neighborhoods, such as the right 1960s-era light fixtures and door handles, even Mason jars for home canners. Woodward is also a mensch: When an Irvine Ace Hardware closed last year, Woodward offered a job to the owner to make sure he'd have something in this rough economy. Friendly service is a given here, and don't worry about the large parrot who flies around the store: He's the general manager, and he won't poop on you.

2343 N. Tustin Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 541-5268; www.woodwardsace.com.

Best Jeweler

Liberty Diamonds

It's not often you find a jeweler who cares more about the customers than making the next big sale. Troy Lob, vice president of Liberty Diamonds in Irvine, runs the business with his father and places his focus on maintaining relationships with his customers. He knows the power of referrals and has the ability to make everyone who enters his shop feel comfortable. Whether you're working within a tight budget or have an endless money supply, Liberty Diamonds manages to have that something perfect for





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everyone's budget. Once you enter this modest jewelry store, tucked away in an office park, you can browse, unhurried. From engagement rings to wedding bands, know that you're getting the highest-quality, GIA-certified diamonds and lasting service. You can even take a peek into the workshop as they cut and shape the diamonds.

18009 Sky Park Circle, Ste. A, Irvine, (949) 261-8663; www.libertydiamonds.com.

BEST FLER MARKET

Long Beach Outdoor Antique and Collectible Market at Veterans Stadium

The best approach to the greatest flea market in California is to have a game plan. Make a list of things to look for-Betty Boop umbrella stand, for exampleotherwise, dear antique hunter, succumb to the overwhelming 20-acre-wide spread of every knickknack from the past hundred years. There's also beer, so that helps. Vintage clothing, Eames-era furniture, rare vinyl records, kitchenware, estate and costume jewelry, depression glass, old telephones-it's all here among the labyrinth of vendor booths set atop the concrete lot of Veterans Stadium. The market is set up the third Sunday of each month, and there are admission charges (\$5 general admission starts at 6:30 a.m.; an extra fiver gets you in at 5:30 a.m.). Helpful hint: Most of the 800 dealers begin to pack up their wares around 1:30 p.m., which is when the best haggling is done.

4901 E. Conant St., Long Beach; www.longbeachantiquemarket.com.

BEST NURSERY

Tree of Life

You can buy your soil, plants and fruit trees at Lowe's, Home Depot or Armstrong Nursery and feel pretty much the same walking out as you did walking in. Tree of Life is more of a plant buying (and admiring) experience. First, you have to get to the place, inland from the 5 freeway off Ortega Highway. Surrounded by nature instead of mega-malled in, you are free to leisurely walk across the 30-yearold nursery's more than 40 sprawling acres. It's billed as the largest native plant supplier in California, supplying more than 500 species and varieties for landscaping and ecological restoration at the wholesale level; the general public can buy from the Casa la Paz Plant & Book Store. It's the type of place where you can go it alone or enlist the help of a friendly staffer who can tell you which plants attract butterflies or humming birds or produce high vegetable yields.

33201 Ortega Hwy., San Juan Capistrano, (949) 728-0685; www.californianativeplants.com.

BEST PLANT STORE

The Plant Stand

>> best of 2011 ((calendar | food | film | culture | music |

The corner location of this Baker Street business is deceiving. It appears to be a

somewhat small shop, but walk beyond the sheet-metal main building or through the back gates, follow the various paths winding in all directions, and discover just how sprawling the grounds really are. Hangar-sized buildings hold rows upon rows of flowering plants and trees. Much more are neatly arranged outdoors, under nets and alongside the winding paths. If you can name it, chances are it's here, whether it's decorative plants, hearty trees, or bountiful vegetable plants and seeds. Inside the various sheds, you'll find hundreds of plant accessories and unusual gifts. Indeed, if you don't know what to get that special someone, come here and find not only that, but also every present you will need to dole out for the next dozen years. Better to just take what you need now so you have an excuse to return. 2972 Century Place, Costa Mesa, (714) 966-0797; plant-stand.com.

BEST HEALTH-FOOD STORE

Natural Tonic Center

Bear with us: Natural Tonic Center is the official name of the health-food store near the post office on Warner Avenue in Huntington Beach-but on the marquee for the shop is the ever-cryptic "Health Food." But what draws in the crowds isn't so much the multitude of dietary supplements, manuals on good living and medicine ranging from homeopathic to olfactoryalthough people come in at all hours to fill up on such things—but rather Esther's Place, an unadvertised lunch counter smack-dab in the center of the store run by the always-dressed-to-the-nines Esther Kim, who offers filling meals ranging from chicken sandwiches to artfully crafted tomato bisques that seem out of place at such a hippie-dippy place. Confused yet? Don't be. Just visit the address we list and be prepared to love your health.

6789 Warner Ave., Huntington Beach, (714) 847-5325; www.naturaltoniccenter.com.

BEST LIQUOR STORE

Vendome Wine & Spirits

Wine-buying is intimidating for the uninitiated. The stakes are sometimes high. Is that \$80 bottle you're buying to impress the wine snob coming to dinner going to get you in trouble? Will you be mocked for not knowing the difference between Carignane and Cinsaut? Vendome to the rescue. Wine tastings are held every other week under the tutelage of David Sanchez, a rara avis among wine geeks: simultaneously well-versed and down to earth. He and Vendome's staff are there to help you. There's also a full selection of craft beers along the back wall, plus enough hard liquor-including hundreds of tequilas and a big selection of single-malt Scotchto last until the end of days.

3115 Yorba Linda Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 524-0800: www.vendomes.com.

OCWEEKLY.COM

READERS' CHOICE: HI-TIME WINE CELLARS



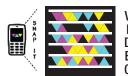
OCWEEKLY PROMOTIONAL SPOTLIGHT BEST OF 2011 **EXCLUSIVE VIDEO**

Shades Restaurant at the Waterfront Beach Resort in Huntington sets itself apart from other seaside Southern California restaurants in many ways. A far cry from your average hotel restaurant with a view, this establishment combines ambiance, tradition, creative dishes and seasonal ingredients to wow diners on every visit.

The exquisite menu from Executive Chef Jeff Littlefield features hand-selected farmers market ingredients served at their freshest, and his delicate preparation puts the spotlight on the true flavors of each element. As a testament to Littlefield's commitment to the integrity of flavor, Shades employs an ingredient of the month program. Fans of the restaurant submit suggestions for which ingredients they'd like to see featured, and one at the peak of its season is chosen to be the focus of four dishes, each served for one week over the course of the month. The best part? The diner with the winning submission is invited to enjoy the each week's featured plate free!

SHADES RESTAURANT & BAR 21100 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY **HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA 92648** (714) 845-8000





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rin tanaka



in Tanaka's love for vintage Americana is one that's hard to find even here—in America. You can call him an American vintage-fashion historian, but with 12 books—and that's just counting the ones in English—on the topic under his (obviously also vintage) belt, Tanaka has easily secured his place as a major cult favorite among the sartorial sect.

Tanaka, 41, hails from San Clemente by way of Yokohama, Japan, and says his love for all things vintage began in the early '80s at the age of 12... when searching for that perfect pair of vintage Levi's 501XX. As a child, he had noticed sailors in their 501s on Yokohama's U.S. Naval base.

His love for motorcycles is a common thread throughout his sought-after bibliography: Painstakingly chronicling motorcycle jackets, helmets, Harley-Davidson fashions of the 1900s, "I've preferred motorcycles to automobiles since my teenage years," Tanaka explains. "Motorcycle jackets are also connected to my rock fashion life, too!"

Tanaka's latest book, King of Vintage Vol. 3: Heller's Cafe Featuring Americana Clothing From Larry's Collection Part 2, was recently released in Japan and stateside. His final installment of the My Freedamn! series (part 10 for anyone keeping track) will be released next summer.

Tanaka is also keeping busy by organizing the thirdannual Inspiration, a vintage event aboard the Queen Mary that's described by Kathleen Schaaf, owner of Meow Vintage on Long Beach's Fourth Street Retro Row, as unlike any vintage-industry trade show. "It's as if you were invited to do some secret indie-business trade show that you hear about but you're never able to go as a consumer," she says.

In the meantime, Tanaka's still—always—searching for his next big discovery, having just returned from a trip to Michigan on an excavation for some Herman Miller. "It was once easy to find vintage items in old towns in the OC area,' he says, "but it has been harder since 1998 thanks to eBay!"

his high scores

- San Onofre Beach. "Whenever I find some free time in the evenings, I always head down to San Onofre Beach with my surf boardsrelaxing with local surfers at sunset is always fantastic!" Interstate 5 and Basilone Road, San Clemente, (949) 492-4872.
- Soest Guitars. "Owner Steve Soest is my 'vintage guitar' teacher—during my conversations with him at his shop, many local guitar freaks stop in." 760 N. Main St., Ste. D. Orange, (714) 538-0272; www.soestguitar.com.
- Fourth Street/Retro Row. "Fourth Street is the best vintage fashion and antiques shopping area—especially Meow, which has been the top vintage store in the OC/Long Beach area for the past 25 years!" Fourth Street between Cherry and Junipero avenues, Long Beach; www.4thstreetlongbeach.com.
- Thalia Surf Shop. "This shop has been the coolest and on the cutting edge of the California surf scene for the past decade!" 915 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-3292; www.thaliasurf.com.
- Pro Photo Connection. "Local professional photographers always gather at this place to find new or used equipment or for rental. I'm here

every week." 17671 Fitch, Irvine, (949) 250-7073; www.prophotoconnection.com.

- Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach. "There are many midcentury homes on this street. Driving down Long Beach's Ocean Boulevard makes for an amazing SoCal Modernism house tour."
- Beachcomber Motel. "Underneath a sky of countless stars, it's easy to sleep well with the beautiful sound of waves beside the San Clemente Pier." 533 Avenida Victoria, San Clemente, (949) 492-5457; beachcombermotel.com.
- Manpuku. "Manpuku is a very busy barbecue restaurant straight out of Tokyo! When I miss real Japanese barbecue. I go to this place with a hungry heart." 891 Baker St., Ste. A-2, Costa Mesa, (714) 708-3290; www.manpuku.us.
- Long Beach Antique Market. "Second Sunday is the Rose Bowl, third is Long Beach—this is the monthly schedule for SoCal swapmeeters. Long Beach is especially good for finding vintage furniture and home decorations." Long Beach Veterans Stadium, 4901 E. Conant St., Long Beach, (323) 655-5703; www.longbeachantiquemarket.com.
- Ortega Highway in San Juan Capistrano. "If I want to escape daily beach life, riding my Harley-Davidson on Ortega Highway is very thrilling! Beyond the mountains, you can reach another world: Lake Elsinore, home of motocross freaks."
- Favorite video game: "I have never played a video game since Pac-Man."



BY VICKIE CHANG

PHOTO BY JOHN GILHOOLEY







Established in 1988, the independent store expanded to three locations throughout the county in its heyday before shifting trends in music buying (and pirating) contracted it back to its original Cypress spot. It relocated this year to a Buena Park storefront a block and a half south from its old space. Under the new ownership of Mike D, the store still leans toward punk, metal (check out the "underground metal" subsection stocked with CDs from bands with such life-affirming names as Agoraphobic Nosebleed, Gorgasm, Napalm Death and Savage Messiah) and alternative, but it also offers a respectable underground hip-hop selec-

tion. On the other side, a sitting stool is provided to support methodical crate-diggers who thumb through vinyl records priced between \$4 and \$22. Used CDs start from just 99 cents, with the metal section kindly decorated with black-marker-drawn pentagrams and upsidedown crucifixes. Along the main wall, you'll find boasting your favor-

ite bands: Nirvana, Rage Against the Machine, the Doors, Wu-Tang Clan and At the Drive-in. Buttons, patches, stickers, poster racks (remember those?) and other music paraphernalia round out the product line. On the way out, pick up an OC Weekly from the magazine rack, especially if you missed a week or two; Bionic has back issues!

6012 Ball Rd., Buena Park, (714) 828-4225. READERS' CHOICE: SECOND SPIN

MILE-OF-WASTED-GAS RECORD STORE

Radiation Records

In true punk-rock DIY form, Radiation Records doesn't advertise its existence. It doesn't have a website and doesn't run its Facebook page. Tucked away in an industrial building next to a Boy Scouts shop, it relies mostly on word-of-mouth and devoted followers. And the loyalty is welldeserved, with its well-stocked collection of obscure punk records and all the applicable accessories, patches and pins a young punk could want. A screen-printing operation in the backroom makes the hundreds of T-shirts that obscure the shop's poster-plastered walls. You're not going to get too much in the way of customer service, but there are damn good prices for damn good records.

1501 N. Raymond Ave., Anaheim, (714) 400-0019.

Black Hole Records

Fullerton was an epicenter of early punk in Orange County, breeding Social Distortion, the Mechanics, Adolescents, D.I. and others, and one blond, bespectacled man has carried the punk torch in the city for nearly 20 years. Bill Evans started Black Hole Records with his wife, Anna, after quitting Naughty Women, which included among its members iconic punkers Izzy Stradlin, Rikk Agnew and a teenage Mike Ness as a roadie. It's firsthand experiences with such musicians that makes a trip to Black Hole a crash course in punk (and even rock). Some record stores won't give you more than a "hello" when you walk in, but bring a Smiths

> album to the counter, and Evans will tell you more

than you ever wanted to know about Morrissey. There's no empty space on the walls, long-filled floor to ceiling with vinvl relics of punk days long since past. Even the name of the store pays tribute to a Fullerton punk

landmark-Ness' crash pad was aptly named "The Black Hole."

108 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 449-1788.

BEST SPA

Montanya Spa

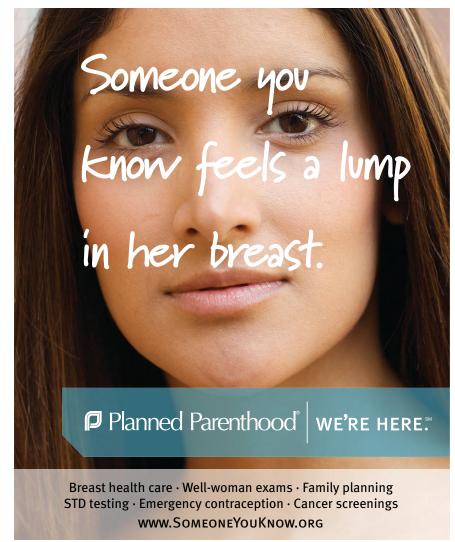
Montanya Spa is a place where godawful spa clichés come from. It is a hidden gem, a Zen-like oasis tucked away from the hustle and bustle, a peaceful escape. And we're hooked. There's something restorative about sitting with a mimosa on the bamboo-enrobed patio of a haven inspired by a Japanese tea house, watching vibrant water lilies float near a Buddha statue and awaiting invigorating treatments such as a Thai yoga massage (\$125 for 75 minutes), sea-salt body glow (\$70) or South Pacific hot-stone therapy (\$135 for 75 minutes). It's enough to melt away the cares of even the biggest grumps—and frazzled journalists....

120 W. 20th St., Santa Ana, (714) 918-8888; www.montanya-spa.com. READERS' CHOICE: BURKE WILLIAMS

BEST LASER HÀIR REMOVAL

Image Perfect Laser

Being furry is the pits. Razor burn, ingrowns, 5-o'clock shadows (not just on the face), laying in compromising positions before a technician with a tub of wax-it's enough to make you want to pull your hair out, if that were even an option. Today's technology lets you banish the

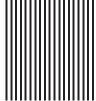












fuzz for good, and if you decide to go that route, laserologists Teresa Cadwallader and Michael Heunemann vow to make the procedure as safe and comfortable as possible. In their pleasant, non-sterile-looking office, they use a state-of-the-art, computer-customized system to zap the life out of your follicles, easing the pain with a numbing cream and carefully scouring for every last stray. Hair today, gone . . . about six treatments later (depending on your situation).

4716 Barranca Pkwy., Irvine, (949) 387-1404; www.imageperfectlaser.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: DR. THTTOFF

BEST BLOW JOB

drybar

There's tugging, teasing, huffing and sweating involved, but a date with the blow dryer is far from sexy. Looking good can be a major pain in the biceps. That's where drybar comes in. With the straightforward (and trademarked!) slogan "No cuts. No color. Just blowouts," the ultra-chic salon in Fashion Island's Atrium Court lets you plop onto a gleaming-white swivel chair, sip a complimentary mimosa (or other pretty beverage) and zone out to chick flicks playing on TV screens while a friendly savior takes over the grunt work of amping up or taming down your tresses. Thirty-five bucks gets you a feel-good shampoo, along with your choice of cheekily named styles: Cosmopolitan (loads of loose curls), Straight Up (simple and straight), Southern Comfort (big and voluminous), Mai Tai (beachy waves) or Manhattan (sleek and smooth). Forty minutes later, you'll look in the mirror and be blown away.

401 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 298-4676; www.thedrybar.com.

BEST MANICURE-PEDICURE

The Nail Lounge

What makes the Nail Lounge so good is that everyone there is a little OCD. The place is immaculate, and the nail technicians are sticklers for sanitation, constantly disinfecting tools and using only brand-new, still-sealed nail files and buffers that they later let you take home. With that peace of mind, you can sink into the white chairs decked with neon magenta and orange pillows, listen to whatever sugary pop tune they have playing overhead, and watch your nails get prettified. They offer an insane variety of polish brands to choose from, among them Chanel, OPI, Essie, even the almost-impossible-to-find Shellac no-chip gel, which lasts a minimum of two weeks (many customers say their mani-pedis stay put for four weeks or longer). Services are on the pricey side, ranging from a \$22 quickie to a \$72 "Aromatic Chocolate Mint Pedicure," though you can get free upgrades on "Mani Monday" and "Tootsie Tuesday.'

369 E. 17th St., Ste. 26, Costa Mesa, (949) 515-5115; www.thenailloungeonline.com. READERS' CHOICE: HAPPY NAILS

BEST HAIR PRODUCT

Suavecito

What Brylcreem was for a generation of American men, Three Flowers represented for a generation of Latinos: pomade that made hair shine as bright as a spotlight. The only problem was its industrial strength meant it remained in your hair after multiple shampoo treatments. In comes Suavecito, a pomade with the same iron grip as Three Flowers, but with an even brighter shine, a more pleasant scent and a smoother texture, yet it washes out easily. The Santa Ana guys behind it aren't exactly tech-savvy-they still run a MySpace page, for chrissakesand the only local store that carries it is the ever-chingón Calacas in Santa Ana, but here is a pomade perfect for your grandpa, your rockabilly cousin or you, whenever you decide to grow up and properly groom your hair. Besides, how can you not love a brand whose mascot is a skeleton running his comb through a massive pompadour? www.suavecitopomade.com.

BEST BARBERSHOP

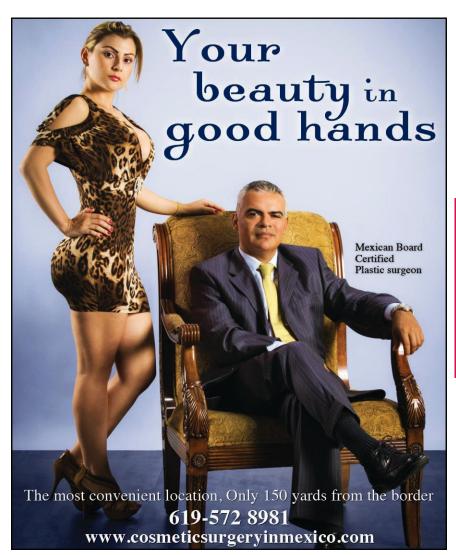
Barbería El Catrin

There are barbershops run by young guns who try too hard to be traditionalistslimited to men, run by guys whose hair is just a bit too kept to trust-but predictably fall flat as poseurs. And then there are the places like this tiny spot, where tradition blooms naturally, the entertainment can be anything from ska to *Dumb* and Dumber; the clientele includes lawyers, cholos and rockabillies; the reading material those old Time-Life encyclopedias of bizarre crimes or Harper's; and the conversation is always free-flowing. But most important is the crew run by Carlos "Exit" Landeros, who does the full hot-towel treatment behind the vintage swivel chairs, but also knows his fades from his blends, D.A.s from pompadours, and a 1.5 from a 2. Help yourself to a brewsky from the Depression-era fridge— Exit and company will insist.

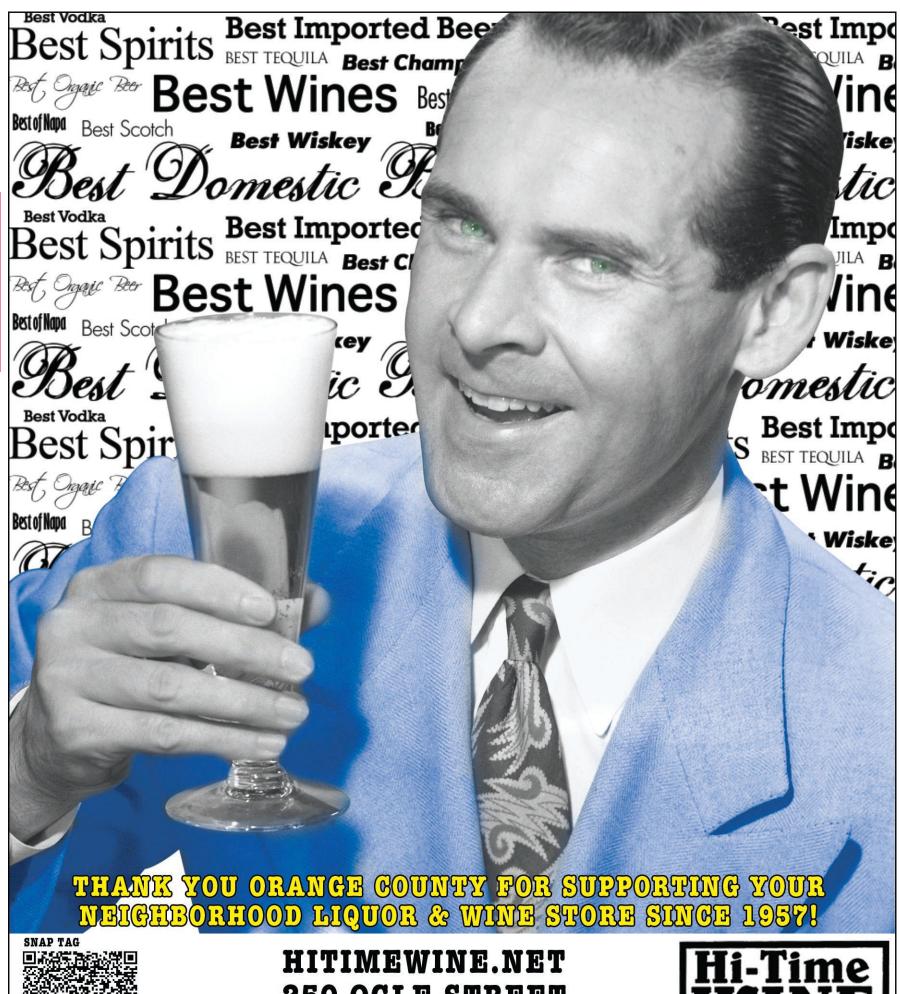
400 W. Fourth St., Ste. B, Santa Ana, (714) 558-3948.

BEST HAIR SALON

Salon Pop and Barber Shop Like every other salon, Salon Pop and Barber Shop cuts hair and provides barber shaves, facials, mani-pedis and waxes. But what sets it apart is its aesthetic: It's both old and new, juxtaposing its retro décor with a fresh, hip vibe. The salon uses vintage dressers as hair-cutting stations, has a special barber station for straight-razor shaves-and offers PBR or wine while you wait for service, instead of the usual coffee and tea, regardless of whether your appointment is at 11 a.m. or 5 p.m. It feels kind of like the inside of your kooky grandmother's boudoir, and it wouldn't be unusual to get hugs after your service. It's an easy, anything-goes atmosphere that translates into the way they style your hair (cuts range from \$20









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to \$65) and perform other services (manipedis are \$30 to \$70).

2218 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 987-9200; www.salonpopandbarbershop.com.

BEST TATTOO PARLOR

Bad Influence Tattoo

When Bob Nguyen was 14, he thought being a tattoo artist would be a good way to hook up with chicks. As the years passed, Nguyen realized there was more to tattoos than just getting said chicks, so he established Bad Influence Tattoo in 2003. Whether it's a 3D image of Jesus, blackand-white skulls, a frog with a horn sticking out of his ass with Koi fish swimming around, Invader Zim chasing around an anteater, or geishas, Nguyen and his team will amaze with their precision and nonjudgmental attitude. A green placard reading, "Your body is a temple; decorate it" sits near one of the tattoo stations, and it's not mere hippie-dippy claptrap: Nguyen's shop follows the principles of chi and feng shui. 9475 Heil St., Ste. C, Fountain Valley, (714) 531-

BEST PLACE TO GET PIERCED

2155; badinfluencetattoo.com.

READERS' CHOICE: OUTER

LIMITS TATTOO

Distinctive Body Art Tattoo & Piercing

The parlor features highly skilled piercers who will ease your worries when it comes to getting your first. One of the piercers at the shop was even trained by the famous Cholo, best-known for performing unique body piercings. As you walk into the shop, you'll see a variety of movie posters, World War II memorabilia and old license plates from Marine veterans, plus a huge fish tank (quite helpful in distracting anxious customers) near a piercing station. Store owner Shaun Loyer started tattooing in his garage before opening this shop last year, but he is already making his mark—and hole!

22706 Aspan St., Ste. 600A, Lake Forest, (949) 916-3561; www.distinctivebodyart.webs.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: ELECTRIC CHRIR TRTTOO

BEST WAY TO GET A PET

German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County

If you're looking to get a new pet, why not adopt a dog rescued from a high-kill shelter or abandoned by its owner? The German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County (GSROC), a nonprofit organization serving our area as well as greater LA, is dedicated to "rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing purebred German shepherd dogs" in need. Along with adoptable dogs' sizes and approximate ages, the GSROC website includes multiple photos and gives you the truth about the animal's demeanor and needs. You can read up on a dog's known history, how it was rescued, if it can be around cats and children, if it requires special medi-

cal attention, etc.—all details absent from most rescue and shelter websites. The organization screens potential adoptive families, ensuring the dogs are going to good homes and that you are ending up with a dog that fits your lifestyle—a perfect match for both sides. All dogs from the GSROC are spayed or neutered, current on their vaccinations, and de-wormed. The minimum adoption donation is \$350, plus \$25 for microchip for dogs older than 1, or \$450, plus \$25 for microchip for dogs 1 year old and younger. The donation is tax-deductible and helps further the group's mission.

177F Riverside Ave., Ste. 143, Newport Beach, (714) 974-7762; ww.gsroc.org. RENDERS' CHOICE: STELLA'S HOPE

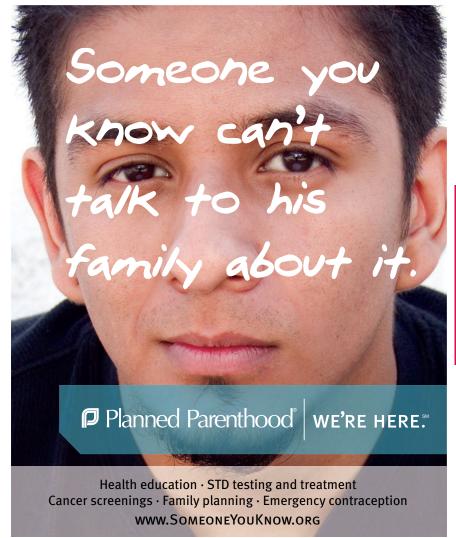
BEST SHOP FOR BRIDES-TO-BE

The Wedding Pantry The world of wedding planning can be a frightening place, one swirling with bridesmaid dresses that resemble Aunt Mildred's kitchen curtains and DJs who believe it ain't a party until you hear "Macarena." Fortunately, a safe haven awaits. Curated by event-planning goddess Eva Chiou, the Wedding Pantry offers everything you need to make your big day special, smooth-flowing and completely you, from the nuts and bolts (planning services, gowns, accessories) to the squee-worthy details (handcrafted ring-bearer pillows, colorful cake stands, striped paper straws) to the stuff that often goes overlooked (cushy foot pads for a long night of dancing in stilettos). Brides-to-be can sift and snip through a library of wedding magazines, check out the latest trends at trunk shows and makeup demos, or sign up for various DIY workshops offered throughout the yearthink calligraphy, favor-making and floralarranging. When it comes to wedding resources, you might say this is the One. 138 W. Main St., Tustin, (714) 505-9927;

BEST SEX SHOP

www.theweddingpantry.com.

Spankys Adult Emporium Decked with Christmas lights, a sky-high sign that screams, "SPANKYS," and a vintage cop cruiser permanently parked in front, the kitschy-ness of the longstanding 24/7 porn shop—along with its legendary graphics of a man spanking a monkey, rubbing a rocket, choking a chicken and having one arm significantly buffer than the other-is usually enough to lure folks in, just to, um, check it out. But once inside, it's easy to linger. Clean and well-lit, with dark-wood fixtures and impressively organized displays, the place is ... nice. Yes, there is porn—rows and rows of porn, very well-categorized porn to rent or purchase (titles start at about \$10). Whatever you're into, from the vanilla stuff to DPs, it can probably be found here. But for those not as into porn (or for those who get it on the Internet), there are gadgets and gizmos aplenty to ogle or snicker at;

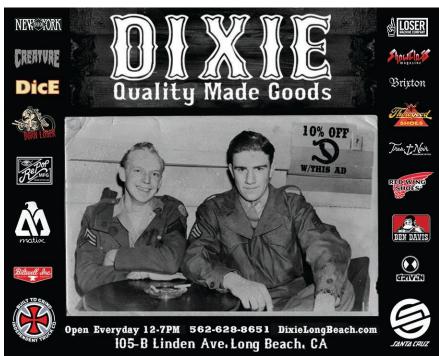




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things that buzz, plug and inflate (Anyone need a blow-up bondage chair or a "Big O" Obama-inspired dildo?); and an S&M section. There's also a selection of bachelor- and bachelorette-party necessities, including pecker cake pans, sippy dick straws and boob-tube beer bongs. Couples get a discount, so make it a date.

213 N. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 554-4495; www.spankysxxx.com. READERS' CHOICE: CONDOM REVOLUTION

BEST PLACE TO FUEL YOUR CREATIVE FIRE

Art Supply Warehouse Compared to the sterile, Martha Stewartesque, holiday-themed aisles of corporate art suppliers, the shelves of Westminster's Art Supply Warehouse are a jungle of natural resources. Frequented by professional studio artists and dedicated hobbyists, Art Supply Warehouse is, essentially, where you'd sidle up to if you intended to get some serious shit done. As intimidating as it may sound for the artistic newbie, the employees there have got your back and strive to assist without judging. As an added bonus, they even know what they're talking about! Experts in every artistic medium traverse the floor, lending a paint-stained hand to anyone in need of navigation. They'll not only steer you through the forest of drafting boards, quills, model kits, sculpting clays, yarns, paints, pens and lumber, but also counsel you on the purchase best suited to your needs. The only thing they don't carry is talent, but with the right equipment, even that can be discovered. 6672 Westminster Blvd., Westminster, (714) 891-3626; www.artsupplywarehouse.com.

BEST MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, CENTRAL OC

American Collective

This friendly storefront on Cabrillo Street has an onsite verification lobby located next door to the actual dispensary, which has a curtain providing privacy for patients selecting their medicine. This is not a dispensary for early risers: The American Collective is open daily from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. The friendly staff will direct you to a variety of special deals, including generous buy-oneget-one-free specials. For those who can't leave their homes or prefer to stay there, the collective offers a free delivery service. And it has the advantage of not having been raided even once by Costa Mesa's finest. 130 Cabrillo St., Costa Mesa, (714) 599-4064; www.americancollective.com.

BEST MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, NORTH OC

Unit D Patient Collective This is Garden Grove's longest-running collective, the Orange County outpost of Joe Grumbine and Joe Byron's oncesprawling network of Long Beach dispensaries. It's where their whole sad saga began, the one that ended with their Dec.

17, 2009, arrests and the closure of every collective except this one, which reopened a few days after the raid. Referred to by supporters as the Mothers Theresa of medical marijuana, Byron and Grumbine have provided free food, clothing and medicine to their membership over the years—even wheelchairs and other services for lowincome and disabled friends. Come for the happy-hour specials and the fine selection of strains and affordable prices; stay for the friendship and patient-loyalty program. 11471 Brookhurst St., Ste. D, Garden Grove, (714) 590-9100.

BEST MARIJUANA DISPENSARY, SOUTH OC

Care Mutual

This Foothill Ranch-based collective used to operate under the rather grandiose name God's Great Green Earth Collective, which spawned the popular online weed university God's Great Green Earth College Online. The high-end cannabis club caters to a more upscale customer base than many OC collectives. Its extensive menu features an array of indica and sativa strains, almost all of which are priced at \$15 to \$20 per gram and less than \$60 per eighth. Daily happy-hour specials (from 1 p.m. to 4:20 p.m.) offer customers a free joint if they spend \$20. There's also a handsome selection of hash, tinctures and edibles, and for you DIY types, you can get your own clones for just \$15 each.

26730 Towne Centre Dr., Ste. 203, Foothill Ranch, (949) 215-4467.

BEST SMOKE SHOP

One Stop Smoke Shop This establishment is in the business of healing broken hearts and broken glass. Whether you have clumsy friends or your parents got pissed and broke your piece of glass-blown beauty, gather the remains of your water pipe and bring them down to One Stop. It offers affordable repairs, among other smoker-friendly services—just one way owner Cara Bentley goes out of her way for customer service. She features a huge selection of every kind of smoking device beyond an apple or a soda can, including high-end pipes such as Roor and glass from local artists. There's also a generous frequent-buyer program and online coupons. One Stop breaks the stereotype that every smoke shop has a Spicoli behind the counter.

18582 Beach Blvd., Ste. 9, Huntington Beach, (714) 964-3400: www.onestopsmokeshophb.com.

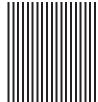
BEST SURF SHOP

Icons of Surf

If you buy a surfboard at Icons of Surf, chances are you won't paddle out to your local lineup only to see a fellow surfer riding the same exact damn board. Why? Icons doesn't sell boards of the manufactured overseas variety. At Icons, no two boards look alike. Each is unique, much like the artisan of the shaping industry who created







it from a block of foam. The shapers represented are only those Icons deems worthy. The number of boards in shop varies from week to week, and so too do the shapes and artwork. The one thing to be certain of is that you won't find a white, sand-finished board in the racks. If you find yourself bewildered by the olive-colored board with the fish outline and an unorthodox fin set-up, don't let the guy behind the counter with the hipster mustache intimidate you: He's quick with a smile and has a vast knowledge of wave-riding apparati that he's more than willing to share.

710 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, (949) 429-7133; iconsofsurf.com. READERS' CHOICE: JACK'S SURF SHOP

BEST BIKE SHOP

Buena Park Bicycles Those familiar with mountain-biking culture know its aficionados tend to get über-technical about their beloved sport. But who has time to think about component specs when tearing down a rocky single-track? Sometimes, simplic-ity is best, and you'll

find it at Buena Park Bicycles. Forgoing such high-pressure sales tactics as aggressively pushing chain lubricant (oh, it happens, and it ain't pretty-trust us), the staff here actually give you a chance to experience the ample selection in the large store. Its stock of mountain bikes, road bikes and beach cruisers primarily features big-box brands Specialized and Giant and will run from the low hundreds to more than a few grand. There's also a wide selection of bike accessories, helmets, lights and outerwear. Best of all, Buena Park Bicycles works quick when servicing your bike, lets you take your time when deciding what you want, and, as befits a store located in North County, se habla español!

6042 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 521-8120; www.fullertonbicycle.com.

BEST SKATE SHOP

Long Beach Skate In its little more than two years, Long Beach Skate has been dishing out solid deals on the latest skateboarding gear. The husband-and-wife team of Tim Scanlan and Carrie White also makes a conscious effort to push beyond mere trade to get directly involved with outreach and advocacy for the Long Beach skating community. In addition to more obvious efforts such as sponsoring skate events, Long Beach Skate works behind-the-scenes with City Council members to build the number and quality of skate havens in the hopes of keeping the local youth active and out of trouble. As icing on the cake, the establishment offers a recycling credit for old

boards and wheels. In collaboration with

LA Skate, unusable wheels are responsibly disposed of, while those that are moderately worn are placed aside and doled out to broke-ass skaters who can put them to good use. Old boards score you a \$2 discount toward purchases and are reborn as canvases for innovative art installations. 3138 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, (562) 434-5527; www.lbskate.com.

BEST MECHANIC

Mihai Torok

Anaheim's First Class Auto Center is one of many mechanic shops along the long strip of Lincoln Avenue. Even so, the garage of owner Mihai Torok's general auto-repair business is steadily filled with foreign and domestic cars and trucks in

need of everything from tune-ups to brake jobs, smog checks to oil changes. Torok, a Romanian immigrant who has run the

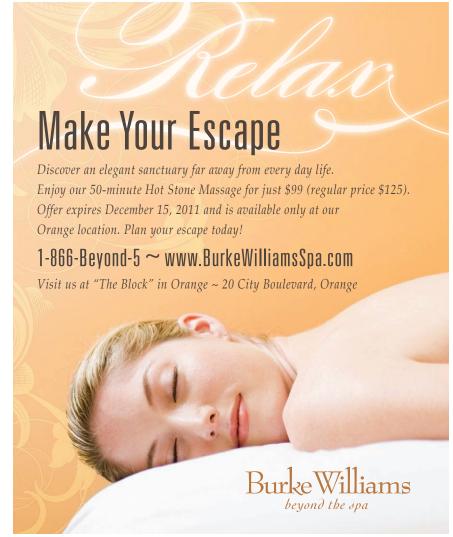
shop for 19 years, excels not only in providing reliable service. but he also creates a personable work environment in an industry wellknown for its

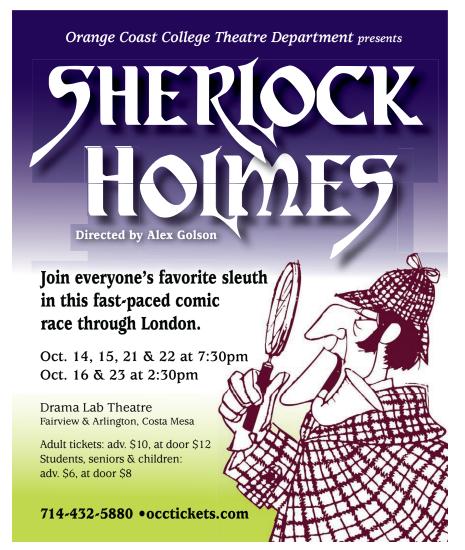


BEST DANCINGтеярот мякея

Kazem Arshi

Sometimes, you don't know you need something until you see it. That's the case with most of Kazem Arshi's creations. You could sip your coffee out of any dingy ol' store-bought cup, or you could get your morning caffeine kick while gazing at the turquoise-hued glaze inside your handcrafted mug. Tough choice, right? The local pottery whiz has an artistic eye, hence his graphic-design degree from Cal State Fullerton. He got a feel for the wheel more than 15 years ago in a communitycollege pottery class. Arshi's menagerie of creations runs the gamut from small, practical household items-such as vases and mugs-to bigger, not-as-practical-butreally-cool treasures, such as dancing teapots. Have a friend who loves to dance and drink tea? Well, then, Arshi's intentionally





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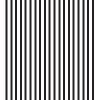


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lopsided, porcelain clay pot is the perfect gift. But what about your kite-loving and kimono-obsessed friends? No worries; Arshi's teapot collection has them covered, too. And his prices won't break the bank. Browse through the items on his Etsy.com store, and you'll find a \$15 vase and a \$10 ring holder. Another plus about buying from him: There's no middleman. Arshi is both the artist and the seller, so he knows his products—and he can look at them with a critical eye. The price of one of the teapots listed on his website was discounted "because the body of the teapot leans forward a little bit." Fittingly, he named it the Swept Away Teapot. If you're still not convinced Arshi is the best damn potter around, go check out the comments section on his website. All of the more than 140 comments are positive, and most of them drip with the gushy obsession of a high-school love letter.

BEST CHEAP HOME ART

The Poster List

ocpottery.com.

Finding affordable, non-cheesy home art is easy for experienced flea-market pickers, but a headache for décor novices who simply want to spruce up a drab apartment's walls. Luckily, there's the Poster List, a Long Beach-based supplier of simple yet super-cool posters and post cards that earn the approval of trendsters and hipsters alike. Designs range from city-specific (vintage-looking renderings of NYC's West End Towers, San Francisco's Marina District and the Santa Monica Pier) to quirky (colorful images of bicycles, Eames chairs and roosters) to motivational ("Keep Calm and Carry On," "Do Your Best" and "Never Never Give Up," all in typographical perfection). Owner/designer Adam Luedicke sells the art online and at local fairs and festivals, so keep checking his event schedule. At \$10.99 for a 12-by-18 print, you'll only wish you had more drab wallspace. www.theposterlist.com.

BEST MULTIPURPOSE PHOTOGRAPHER

Jeremiah Klein

Digital photography has made almost anyone willing to dump some money on decent equipment a photographer. Or so they think. The best are still the ones who capture the brief moments that make us stop and stare. Jeremiah Klein, who's originally from Anaheim, is one of those established, versatile photographers. Whether he's shooting from just below the lip at Pipeline or perched on a hill down the beach behind his 600 mm lens, his surf photography unveils the angles and artistic approaches other surf photographers (who all seem to suffer from sheep mentality) tend to miss. In his wedding portfolio, he captures the sort of images that make grown men actually give a damn. If you want the in-demand "Miah" Klein to shoot your nuptials, just schedule him. If you

want him to capture you at your surfing best, well, you better be among the best: He shoots for the world's most popular surfing website, Surfline. studio7photo.net.

BEST PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIAL SERVICES

Fullerton Photographics With the decaying shells of Fotomats withering in strip-mall parking lots around us, we're reminded it takes forward-thinking people to keep pace with the march of technology. Some do this well, while others see the fruits of their labor turned into locksmith kiosks. For a picture-book example of successful evolution, take a gander at Fullerton Photographics. Though it originally focused its services on the analog-film needs of the artistic and student communities, following the death of its hallowed founder, Chris Beard, it was taken over by the enterprising Gabrielle Mullinax, who broadened the store's services and brought it into the digital age. Though it continues to offer hand developing of film, it also features a wide array of printing options, not the least of which includes its celebration-of-life services. Yes, we're talking about funerals. It's morbid, but wait until you're stuck with the corpse of a loved one and have no idea what you're going to do for that person's memorial. Fullerton Photographics offers the grieving family a wealth of reasonably priced options, including shoe-box scanning and a variety of hip-yet-tasteful templates to choose from for memorial cards. Best of all, the staff work fast.

908 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 525-3233; fullertonphoto.com.

BEST REASON TO NEVER LEAVE THE HOUSE

A Ridiculous Home Theater Seeing that we're all controlled by television and movies (at least that's what they always say on FOX News), why not make every viewing moment a thrill? Our ritzy Newport Coast neighbors hire DSI Entertainment Systems to build custom-made home theaters, with giant high-definition screens, perfect acoustics and plush, reclining leather seats. DSI, who are based in Los Angeles but this year opened an Orange County office, claim its professionally designed media rooms surpass the best commercial theaters. Come on! You've lost your retirement nest egg. You've gained a few more pounds. Your eyes have gotten so bad you couldn't read a book even if you wanted to. But you don't have to pout anymore in your lame den, with its antiquated, circa-2008 TV equipment. With DSI's "one-touch button" system, you can have your favorite room converted into your 'total escape." What's the cost? It depends on your imagination, but we know of at least one \$300,000 home-theater bill. 1024 Bayside, Ste. 111, Newport Beach, (949) 870-3219; www.dsientertainment.com.









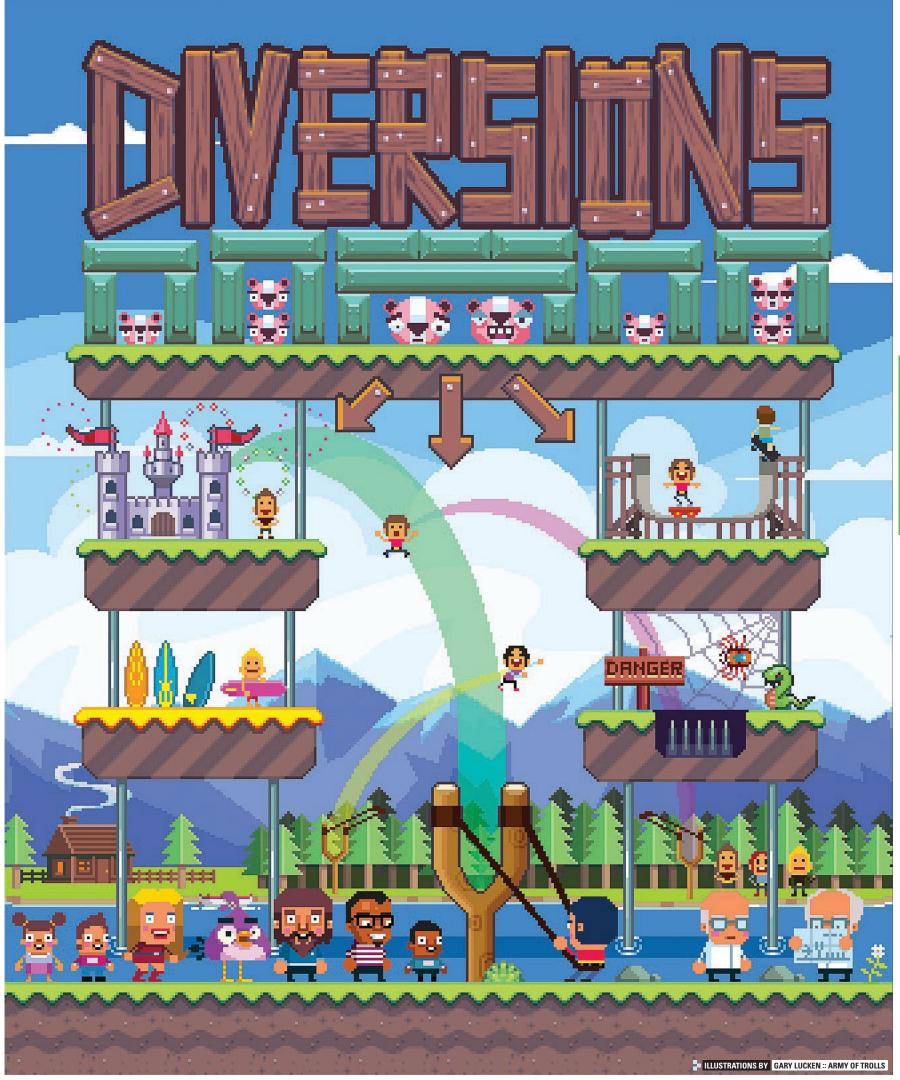






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BEST DUCKS PLAYER

Corey Perry

It should've been a bad year for the Ducks. Newly minted captain Ryan Getzlaf took a puck to the face in a game against Phoenix in December, causing him to spend weeks on the injured reserve list and the team to lose its already-shaky focus. Perry, the Ducks' right wing, stepped up and brought the team to fourth seed in the West, allowing it to advance to the playoffs. Perry's no-holds-barred style around the opponent's net-he's one of the last power forwards and has a mean forecheck—paid off, even though he frequently had to be scraped off the ice by his teammates. All told, he scored 48 assists and a league-high 50 goals during the regular season, most during the last 20 games of the season, with an additional two goals and six assists during the playoffs. Not surprisingly, Perry got the Hart Trophy as the NHL's Most Valuable Player for the 2010-11 season; now that we know what he can do, the heat will be on for the upcoming season.

READERS' CHOICE: TEEMU SELANNE

BEST ANGELS PLAYER

Jered Weaver

Yep, we're going with the Weave again, but this year, we're laying off the stats (which clearly indicate he's not only the Angels' best player, but also one of the best pitchers in baseball). This time, he wins for being old-school. We'll answer the back-and-forth about Weaver's response to two Tigers batters showing him up after their July 31 home runs with a quote, but not one about Weaver. "Barry Bonds?" ex-umpire Doug Harvey once said. "I'll tell you what: If he hit a home run off [Bob] Gibson or [Don] Drysdale and stood and admired it, they'd knock that earring out of his ear the next time up." But seriously, Jered, get a haircut.

READERS' CHOICE: JERED WERVER

BEST COLLEGE PLAYER

Lynn Walker, Vanguard University Women's Tennis

If sports are really half-mental, the amount of emotional baggage in the mind of Lynn Walker would have crippled most collegiate athletes, leaving them on the floor, hugging their knees to their chest and bawling their eyes out. She lost both her father and her mother in traumatic fashion, and last year, she found out that what she thought was a lingering injury in her calf was actually a cancerous tumor. It seemed life had nothing but unfortunate circumstances to present to the now-50-year-old woman. Walker was once a promising junior tennis player in an area of Florida that churned out talent. (She once hit with John McEnroe, before anyone outside Florida knew his name; in true McEnroe fashion, he called her a cunt, and she left the court in tears.) During her senior year of high school, Walker was set to attend an out-of-state university on a

READERS' »YOU WON!! POLL

BEST DUCKS PLRYER Teemu Selanne **BEST ANGELS PLAYER** Jered Weaver BEST COLLEGE PLAYER Michael Lorenzen, Cal State Fullerton BEST CORCH Mike Scioscia, Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim BEST RIDE AT DISNEYLAND Space Mountain

BEST GYM 24 Hour Fitness BEST GOLF COURSE Pelican Hill Golf Club BEST BEACH IN OC Laguna Beach BÉST NATURE TRAI Crystal Cove State Park BÉST SURF SPOT Trestles BEST DAY TAT San Diego

scholarship when her father passed away in the arms of her mother; a femoral artery ruptured, and he bled out onto the family's white rug. Unwilling to leave her mother's side during such a tough time, Walker dropped out of high school and took a job with a high-end fashion company, rising quickly through its ranks. Six years after her mother passed away, Walker, then 47, decided it was time to get a college degree (she had already gotten her GED). She attended Santiago Canyon College before settling at Costa Mesa's Vanguard University and surprised even herself by landing a spot on the women's tennis team-after more than 20 years of not picking up a racket. In her final season of competition-when opponents still occasionally questioned whether a coach was on the

opposite end of the court—she helped the team make it to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Women's Tennis National Championships tournament, competing in both singles and doubles. In May, Walker attended the graduation for the college degree she had long coveted. Next up for Walker: planning her wedding. READERS' CHOICE: MICHAEL

LORENZEN, CAL STATE FULLERTON

BEST AMATEUR SPORTS TEAM

OC Roller Girls

Skating, scars and skimpy clothing—we can't think of anything better to watch on a Saturday night. Since 2006, the OC Roller Girls have been bringing fierce fun to the county, always ready to suit up in knee pads and booty shorts and, their words, "knock a bitch out." For the gutsy gals, who have monikers such as Chick Norris and Ivanna Cocktail, the derby is more than a sexy exhibition on wheels; it's a movement. The organization is dedicated to helping community nonprofits, fostering teamwork and showing that women can, indeed, kick ass. OC Roller Skates, 17208 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach, (714) 847-9097; www.ocrollergirls.com.

BEST CORCH

Tom Tereschuk

In the looming, elephantine shadow of NCAA Division I colossus Cal State Fullerton-and the somewhat-more-elongated, bushy-tailed shadow of the emerging UC Irvine program—Tom Tereschuk has quietly built his non-scholarship baseball squad into a pint-sized powerhouse. A former star pitcher and quarterback at Lakewood High and Long Beach City College, Tereschuk went on to pitch at University of San Diego. After building a stellar reputation as a high-school coach at Servite and Villa Park (he was honored as California Interscholastic Federation Southern Section Coach of the Year in 2000 and 2002), he debuted as Chapman University's coach in 2003 and promptly led his team to a national championship that same year (its first in 35 years). In 2011, his squad made it all the way to the final game before succumbing to Ohio's dreaded Marietta College. (Fucking Pioneers.) During that campaign, Tereschuk topped the 300-win plateau. That's exactly the kind of performance that got him named this year's American Baseball Coaches Association's NCAA Division III West Region Coach of the Year-to go along with the six other times he's earned that title. He has a reputation for toughness, but he also knows when to be supportive. "I remember as a freshman, during regionals, I struck out, and I was afraid that [Tereschuk] was going to be upset," infielder Tyler Hadzinsky told The Panther newspaper this year. "Instead, he gave me the confidence to keep going and was very encouraging. . . . I ended up hitting a home run that game." Good job, coach. And get those Pioneers next year. READERS' CHOICE: MIKE SCIOSCIA, LOS ANGELES ANGELS OF ANAHEIM

BEST HIGH-SCHOOL COACH

Mike Schade

"If it is worth doing, it is worth doing right." These words are spoken by coach Mike Schade during soccer practices at Sunny Hills High School. They're also tacked on the wall of his classroom, where he teaches biology. He attributes his success in class and on the pitch to his parents, who taught him the importance of doing one's part to the best of one's ability. Schade's best has brought Sunny Hills 12 Freeway League titles in his 23 seasons of coaching. Each year, Schade scrimmages against Servite, his Division I alma mater, to ready his team for the new season. But he might have become too good of a role model for one player: His son, a Brea Olinda High Wildcat, scored the winning goal against Sunny Hills last year.

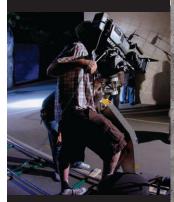
BEST SURF CORCH

Steven Chew

Determined to teach people of all ages the ultimate way to make music with the ocean









LOS ANGELES

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janet evans



Idrick Woods was born in Cypress and attended Anaheim's Western High School. Volleyballer Elaine Youngs was born in Orange. Santa Ana can claim former USC signal-caller Matt Leinart. And nearly every world-class American surfer has spent some time in Huntington Beach.

But when debating who might be the greatest athlete to be born and raised in Orange County, that conversation must include Janet Evans. (Well, Fullerton High School product Walter Johnson was a helluva right-handed pitcher in Major League Baseball, but he was born in Kansas. And he's been dead for 65 years. . . .)

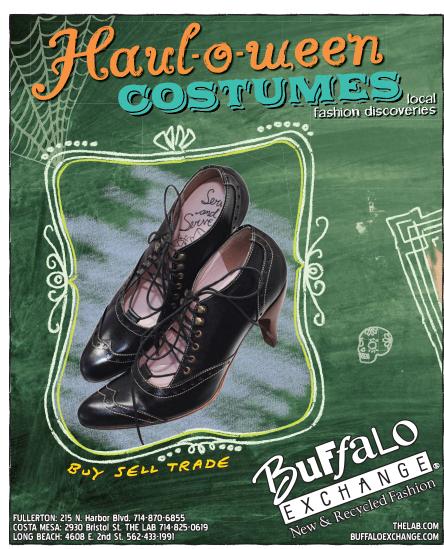
Born in Fullerton and raised in Placentia, Evans started swimming laps at the age of 2. As a teenager, she held off doped-up rivals at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, winning three gold medals, and then added a gold and silver in Barcelona in 1992. She didn't medal in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, but she did hand off the Olympic torch to a former boxer named Muhammad Ali.

Evans retired from competitive swimming 12 years ago at the age of 28. She has spent her years since speaking around the world, hosting swim clinics and writing books, basking in the glory of having her name atop the city of Fullerton's Janet Evans Swim Complex, and raising two children. But she has never stopped swimming. In fact, she announced in June that she's making a comeback and hopes to qualify for the 2012 U.S. Olympic team. Evans, who turned 40 in August, lives in Laguna Beach and is focusing on the two longest individual events: the 400meter and 800-meter freestyles.

her high scores

- Crown Valley Community Pool. "I think it's two bucks [actually \$2.50 for people older than 14]. It's great." 29751 Crown Valley Pkwy., Laguna Niguel.
- Getting wet with her kids. "We love going to the beach and, of course, swimming in pools. I think it's important to put your kids in the water—the earlier the better. I put my little guy in the water at seven weeks and my daughter at five months."
- Not swimming in the ocean. "I prefer lying on the beach and looking at the ocean, rather than swimming. I'm very spoiled. I grew up with chlorine and pools, and that's what I prefer to this day."
- Wearing plenty of sunscreen. "I don't have a favorite, but I do use a lot of it, and it has to have a lot of zinc in it."
- Breakfast at the Harbor House Café. "I love it." 34157 Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point, (949) 496-9270; www.harborhousecafe.com.
- Meals in Laguna Beach. "The Lumberyard is great for lunch or dinner, and Nick's has comfort food. Oh, and Watermarc. How could I forget that?" Lumberyard, 384 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach, (949) 715-3900; www. Iblumberyard.com. Nick's Laguna Beach, 440 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 376-8595; www.thenickco.com. Watermarc, 448 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 376-6272; www.watermarcrestaurant.com.
- Defying the aging process. "When I swim, I don't feel like I'm 40. The biggest problem is when people say you can't do certain things at a certain age. But as long as you're not injured, you can do whatever you like to stay in shape."
- Favorite video game: "Ms. Pac-Man. Any game that occupies a fifth-grader's attention must have done something right."





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october 14-20, 2011 61

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every day, Steven "Sli Dawg" Chew became a coach at the Laguna Beach Surf School. Popular for his humor and artistic perspective about surfing, he shows his students the basics of riding a wave without forgetting to have fun, even if they become pros. Paying an hourly rate of \$80 for private surf lessons might seem a bit steep, but this waterman's time is definitely worth it. The fee includes equipment; mind-opening lectures about marine biology, physical fitness, water safety and ocean awareness; and tons of laughter and fun at the mesmerizing beaches of Laguna. Along with Billabong, Sli-Dawg has founded weekly surf camps that take place during breaks and offer lessons for kids with genetic diseases and other special conditions. Laguna Beach Surf School, 1020 S. Coast

BEST DERTH-DEFYING EXTREME ATHLETE

Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 280-3005.

Chuck Patterson

The things Chuck Patterson does for fun are good fodder for answers to questions such as "How would you want to die?" Riding a stand-up paddleboard at one of the world's most frightening and technical waves, Teahupoo. "Hucking" oneself off a more-than-140-foot snow-covered cliff. Paddling with great white sharks, then going onshore to get a video camera to capture proof. Being dragged into a 30-foot wave at Maverick's, a revered big-wave spot that breaks along a rocky cliff, while wearing water skis and holding snow-skiing poles. While most of us would consider these exciting ways to depart this life, Patterson, a Dana Point resident, does them for the adrenalin rush. How badass does your bungeejumping experience seem now?

BEST SURFING TRIO

Gudauskas Brothers

In surf-speak, the Gudauskas brothers are perpetual "frothers." No, they're not foaming at the mouth like a rabid dog; they're just utterly excited about the lives they've created for themselves that circulate around time spent in the ocean riding waves. One renowned local shaper refers to them as "the mile of smile," for obvious reasons. Whether the trio is out at Lower Trestles for a free surf or in a post-contest heat interview, Pat, Dane and Tanner Gudauskas look like they're walking advertisements for Crest. Each of the San Clemente locals is a sponsored, talented surfer in a different realm of the game: Pat is competing on the Association of Surfing Professionals World Tour; Tanner is attempting to requalify for that tour; and Dane is the wild card, growing his white-blond hair long and chasing massive waves around the globe. Though they live together, if they are in town, it's usually just a brief stop to repack their bags, eat at their favorite spots and sleep in their own beds before departing on a swing through Australia or Europe, chasing rating points or for a sponsor's photo

trip. We'd "froth," too, if it were our life.

BEST GROM

Chance Gaul

What's a "grom"? Well, think of a kid riding waves and shredding hills just as well as-or better than-older pros. If you still don't get it, here's a good example: Born and raised in Laguna Beach, 14-year-old Chance Gaul is already a world downhillskateboarding champion, as well as a junior national champion. His fearless competitiveness, enthusiasm and athletic skills have made him stand out in the worlds of professional surfing, skimming and skating, earning him 16 sponsorships with companies such as ABEC 11 Skateboard Wheels. XS Energy Drink, Grape Skimboards and Radar Skateboard. If this is how far he has gone as a grom, imagine what he can earn once he reaches the age of a pro.

BEST GOLFING MUSICIAN

John Lepak

No, the La Habra Heights native and current resident didn't get the big break he wanted. But he lasted seven shows into the Golf Channel's Big Break: Indian Wells before being eliminated. The exposure gave an enormous boost to his band, the New Grooves, who combine original songs with covers and what he describes as "California-soul" and for whom Lepak serves as lead singer/guitarist. But he considers himself a golfer first; he even offers lessons. He earned Pac-10 Freshman of the Year honors in 1999 while playing for Oregon State's golf team, and he has eked out a living playing small tours since turning pro in 2003. He landed the gig on Big Break, a Survivor-like reality-TV show in which contestants compete in golf-skill challenges, with one eliminated each week, by playing an original song he'd written the night before the audition. Though he didn't win the \$55,000 and exempt status at the PGA Tour's Zurich Classic of New Orleans next year, he's only 31. Oh, and did we mention Lepak is also a painter? www.jlepak.net.

BEST DOWNHILL SKATER

Wyatt Gibbs

Saving downhill skateboarding in Laguna Beach has become this young gun's cause. He skates every day wherever he goes, sticking to the safety rules of the downhill sport in an attempt to set a good example for other local athletes, as well as to prevent haters from persuading the Laguna Beach City Council to ban it from the town. But what really makes this 14-year-old kid stand out are his performances at local, national and international skateboarding championships (such as the Britannia Classic in Canada), which have earned him 14 sponsorships from companies including ABEC 11, ADX Apparel, XS Energy Drink, Jet and Edge Boardshop. He even cofounded a skating team called Laguna Beach Alpha Groms that meets at his house to practice and embrace downhill skateboarding-while it's still legal.

Pirate Coast Paddle Co.

In the world of ocean activities, stand-up paddleboarding is swelling in popularity. It combines some of the greatest elements of other water sports—the smooth gliding of kayaking, the simple navigation of canoeing and the core workout of surfing. Pirate Coast Paddle Co. offers a safe, fun introduction to stand-up paddleboarding, with basic lessons, special group events such as sunset paddles, moonlight paddles with glow sticks and family-friendly "popcorn and paddle" movie nights, all around the calming waters of Newport Harbor. Company founders Tim Lukei, Mark Oehlman and Terence Ngo love what they do, and it shows.

Newport Aquatic Center, 1 Whitecliffs Dr., Newport Beach, (714) 600-8454; www.piratecoastpc.com.

BEST GYM

Anteater Recreation Center School gyms aren't typically places to email home about. They're cramped, worn-down and reek of frat boy. That's why so many UC Irvinians take great pride in their glorious overachiever, the Anteater Recreation Center, better known as the ARC. Airy and gleaming, the 89,000-square-foot fitness center features state-of-the-art facilities (athletic courts, an indoor jogging track, top-quality exercise equipment, a heated lap pool), along with such super-impressive extras as a rock-climbing wall, cooking classes, massage rooms and a smoothie bar. The bad news is that you have to be a UC Irvine student, spouse, alum or staffer to get a membership, though guests of members can get a \$5 or \$10 day pass. Befriend your local Anteater today.

680 California Ave., Irvine, (949) 824-5346; www.campusrec.uci.edu.

READERS' CHOICE: 24 HOUR FITNESS

BEST PLACE TO SHAKE (AND SCULPT) THAT ASS

Pap Physique

Treadmill? Boring. Yoga? Boring, with hippies. P90X? That just sounds scary. We can come up with about a zillion excuses to stay glued to the couch and Interwebz, but alas, one Seal Beach fitness studio finally has us speechless (minus some heavy panting). Founded by a former pro ballerina,

the Pop Physique workout is designed to give you long, lean muscles, toned abs and an ass that's gloriously sculpted—in other words, a totally bangin' bod. Each hourlong session is a fast-paced mix of stretches, light weight repetitions, isometric holds, ballet barre exercises and other flab-busting moves, all set to a kick-ass, indie/electronic-dance soundtrack. (Your mama's Jazzercise, this isn't.) The instructors are attentive and super-motivating, pushing you to squeeze those thighs tighter and hold that pose just a liiiiittle longer. Classes are offered at the Seal Beach location seven days a week in a modern, airy space fully equipped with a sprung dance floor, eco-friendly mats and high-tech sound system. (The Costa Mesa location is inside Seed People's Market at the Camp.) Are you ready to burn, baby, burn? 347 N. Main St., Seal Beach, (562) 430-0123; 2937 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 662-7388; www.popphysique.com.

BEST GOLF COURSE

Pelican Hill Golf Club's Ocean North

The Newport Beach resort boasts two Tom Fazio-designed (and -revamped) courses-Ocean North and Ocean South-that have drawn comparisons to Pebble Beach because of their beauty and magnificent ocean views. Of the pair, the North Course is the more wide-open, less difficult and most scenic. There are spectacular ocean views from every tee on the 7,000-yard, par 71 course. And the land surrounding the course is not lined with the cottages you'll find at other world-class golf destinations. Other than the resort, you're surrounded by the Irvine Ranch Land Reserve. So you can lose your ball in nature! You definitely pay for the privilege, so much so that this plays-like-a-public/pays-like-a-private resort would also be a first-ballot nominee for Best Golf Course When Someone Else Is Footing the Green Fees. For tee times reserved up to two weeks in advance, it's \$250 on Mondays and Tuesdays and \$270 Wednesdays through Sundays. Fortunately, with rates like that, you don't have to worry about slow groups in front of you or fast

ones coming up

from behind. And

the pain in your

own wallet dis-





tee box at No. 18, one of California's great finishing holes.

The Resort at Pelican Hill, 22701 Pelican Hill Rd. S., Newport Coast; resort, (949) 467-6800; golf tee reservations, (877) 735-4226; pelicanhill.com.

READERS' CHOICE: PELICAN HILL GOLF CLUB

BEST BEACH IN OC

Crescent Bay

Imagine spending a sunny summer afternoon on a nearly empty beach in Orange County, looking out across the shimmering blue-green water of the Pacific Ocean, with no screaming kids, no trash trucks, no gas fumes from a parking lot, no overwhelmingly large church groups taking over and sand that is actually the color of sand. It may seem like a fantasyland, but if you're willing to do a bit of scouting, you'll discover that such places do still exist along our ever-developing coastline. Crescent Bay in north Laguna Beach is one such option. Turn on Cliff Drive, stay to the right, and park where you can.

West Oceanfront, Laguna Beach. RENDERS' CHOICE: LAGUNA BEACH

BEST BEACH PARKING

The Dana Strand Beach Lot The parking lot above Dana Strand Beach at the north end of Dana Point is one of the last free beach parking lots in Orange County. Enough said. We should mention that anything free comes with a price: Beware the walk through the new multimillion-dollar housing development the Strand at Headlands. The homeowners don't take kindly to outsiders parading through their neighborhood, even if it is a public walkway. The city has tried to install metered parking in the past, but a local uprising (tearing them down with the use of a vehicle, jamming the machine with lead) put those attempts to rest. Long live localism.

Selva Road, Dana Point.

BEST BEACH FOR A LATE-NIGHT BONFIRE

Corona Del Mar State Beach Since lighting bonfires is prohibited at most beaches, Corona del Mar's gorgeous horizon and fire pits are a nighttime blessing. During the day, the beach is home to beautiful tidepools and picturesque landscapes. By night, the beach transforms into the ideal place for a college beach party. If keggers aren't your thing, head for the coast during a weekday for a quieter firelit evening on the cool sand—just check tide reports before you head out.

Marguerite and Ocean Boulevard, Newport Beach, (949) 644-3151; www.parks.ca.gov.

BEST NATURE TRAIL

Peters Canyon Regional Park Here we have a nicely balanced outdoor experience with a range of cool options. Though there are a few teeth-chattering single tracks for the mountain-bike set, most of the trails here are gentle enough for active families and strolling young lovers, offering spectacular windows into the house of nature. Spread out across 354 acres, this spot features a diverse range of natural landmarks, not the least of which is the massive Upper Peters Canyon Reservoir. Nestled in the folds of gently rolling hillsides, it's home to waterfowl and various other feathered friends. Hop onto the Lakeview Trail, which starts at the parking area and covers approximately 2.5 miles. There are spots along this loop that are totally out of sight of nearby highways and houses, lending it the appearance of an isolated glacial lake. It's not uncommon to see critters ranging from raccoons and egrets to frogs, coyotes and the occasional feral parrot.

8548 E. Canyon Ave., Orange; www.ocparks.com/peterscanyon. REHDERS' CHOICE: CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK

BEST VIEW

Beeks' Place
There are lots of weird stories about

Black Star Canyon. One is that rapacious Satanists lurk in the oak groves and await the arrival of unsuspecting virgins walking along the county-owned road. There's also the one about gap-toothed hillbillies confronting startled hikers and brandishing firearms. We'll leave it to you to figure out if any of them are actually true. Though it's spooky, Black Star offers incredible rewards to adventurous souls, with a glorious, sprawling view at 3,000 feet at a spot known as Beeks' Place. Grab your mountain bike or hiking shoes, plus plenty of water and snacks. Take the trail leading from the gate at the terminus of Black Star Canyon Road. Follow the path that meanders leisurely through the aforementioned oak groves. Depending on the time of vear, there might be a clear, blue, babbling brook. Don't dawdle among the homes nestled against the canyon walls-some of the locals don't recognize the fact that a public road bisects their libertarian utopia. The climb out of the lowlands switches back and forth across towering hillsides flush with buckwheat and sage. Though the trip isn't technical, it's a grueling, mostly uphill schlep. At the top, you'll find a massive soccer-ball-shaped Doppler-radar tower owned by the National Weather Service and a cluster of stone buildings without roofs-the remnants of what was once owned by long-dead, former State Senator Joseph Beeks (whose family still owns the Balboa Island Ferry). People not used to seeing clouds from above may experience some vertigo. And those tiny black specks with wings hovering in the atmosphere below? Those are airplanes. Clear days afford views of Catalina Island to the south (enthralled gasp) and Corona to the north (stifling cough). It's not the highest spot in the county (that would be Santiago Peak), but it's within almost everyone's reachand undoubtedly worth the effort.

End of Black Star Canyon Road, Silverado.

BEST PICNIC SPOT

Treasure Island

Located on the ocean side of the walkway that separates the tony Montage Resort &









9 LOCATIONS NATIONWIDE

Spa from the Pacific Ocean, Treasure Island is like stepping into an episode of The O.C. The vista from the clifftop park draws photographers who want to capture the stunning views, especially during sunset. You might even spot celebrity guests strolling around the Montage grounds, catching glimpses of the stunning views of the emerald waters below the sandstone cliffs. A large, manicured lawn dotted with long wooden picnic tables, four-seater square wooden tables and park benches offer multiple sites to park your picnic basket among giant succulents, colorful wildflowers and other native xeriscaping. Stiff ocean breezes can blow across the clifftop lawn, so have a way to anchor your picnic blanket or, better yet, take shelter on the beach encircled by cliffs. The rocky coves, like others along this stretch of the coastline, have tidepools that offer natural distractions at low tide. Be mindful of the rules: No collecting wildlife in the tidepools, no dogs allowed between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., no cooking or open fires, no tents or easy-ups, and plastic containers only. Unlike many Laguna Beach city beaches, Treasure Island has an ample public parking lot, but it'll cost \$1.50 an hour between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., with a threehour limit. (Walk three minutes from the parking lot toward the Montage to find the lawn picnic area.)

Wesley Drive and South Coast Highway, Laguna Beach; www.lagunabeachcity.net/ cityhall/marine/beaches/treasure_island.asp.

BEST PLACE TO BE HIGH

Orange County 200 Staring at stuff is a huge part of a pot enthusiast's day (we bet the tapestry industry singlehandedly owes its success to marijuana), and after a couple of months of enjoying green living, your local park or beach may not have the same smoky allure. So, light a joint (or two) and head to the Orange County Zoo at Irvine Regional Park. Most childless adults haven't been around undomesticated animals since their elementaryschool years and could use a reintroduction to a wild-animal kingdom that exists outside of Interstate 405 traffic (Planet Earth doesn't count, stoner). The Orange County Zoo houses mountain lions, ocelots, porcupines, great horned owls and other creatures native to the Southwest U.S.—so sit back and marvel at the array of fur and feathers. And with all that the zoo offers, the surrounding public will be too engrossed by the black bear scratching its rear to notice you're giggling like a doofus. A mere \$2 gets you into the zoo, but it'll cost you \$3 to \$5 to park.

1 Irvine Park Rd., Orange, (714) 973-6847; www.ocparks.com/oczoo.

BEST CRUERT TO THE PREVIOUS ITEM

The Petting 200 at the Orange County 200 Animals are great—until you'r

Animals are great—until you're confronted with the prospect of feeding one. Disgruntled, dirty and ravenous, petting-

zoo animals are some of the most pitiable creatures at any zoo (and that includes the guy who mucks out the elephant pen). Though the urge to play with something fluffy may intensify with all that bud in your system, the petting zoo isn't exactly primo stoner real estate: There are kids, parents and poop everywhere. Plus, after that goat's suffered about an hour of having some snot-nosed brat wave a food pellet just out of his reach—like that time someone put your Cap'n Crunch in the top cabinet—your pants may start to look like a viable food alternative.

1 Irvine Park Rd., Orange, (714) 973-6847; www.ocparks.com/oczoo.

BEST SUNSET

Laguna Beach

There's a reason MTV chose Laguna Beach as the backdrop for the teenage dramas of dimpled Lauren Conrad and friends: It looks really great on film, and it's particularly gorgeous during sunset. This sunny stretch of sand and aquamarine ocean is conveniently located next to a string of delicious, renowned restaurants, perfect for dinner right after the sun sets. Surfers should (and do) take their boards out into the water to watch the golden sun dip below the horizon, in time to the gentle rocking of the ocean's tide. Main Beach at Pacific Coast Highway and Ocean Avenue, Laguna Beach, (949) 497-3311; www.lagunabeachcity.net/cityhall/ marine/beaches/main_beach.asp.

BEST PLACE TO MAYBE KIDNAP THE BABY JESUS

The Orange Circle

In December, downtown Orange hosts the most P.C. of holiday displays: Smack-dab in Orange's Plaza Square is a Nativity scene with Mary, Joseph and their pride and joy-along with a terrifyingly large Santa Claus, a pagan Christmas tree and a menorah. (No Kwanzaa symbol as of yet.) The thought of Savior-snatching struck us last year as we walked the gaily lit streets. Or does He have one of those GPS things in His tummy to deter any unlawful seizure? If not, wouldn't it be hilarious if some group of atheistic anarchists snagged Baby J and held him for ransom? Not that we're suggesting anybody do anything illegal, of course.... That would be wrong. **Chapman Avenue and Glassell**

BEST THING TO DO IN THE DARK

Full-Moon Kayaking

Street, Orange.

Guide Danny Hough leads kayak tours under the moonglow shining on Newport Beach's Back Bay. Start with a gourmet picnic before setting off on glassy waters for the setting sun. It's an easy paddle that's great for first-timers. Those unsure about their skills (and younger groups) set out on larger, steadier Hawaiian outrigger canoes. Whatever their ability, looky-loos appreciate peering into the quaint and stunning pads that line the Amsterdam-



like canals they glide through. Nature-lovers get a bigger kick out of the bird estuary and the wildlife that is often spotted along the way, including sea lions, dolphins and seabirds galore. If Hough is feeling saucy, he'll extend the evening by stopping for hot chocolate or a frozen banana on Balboa Island. You'll then paddle back to the starting point over tranquil waters that will have you wanting to come back for more.

Newport Aquatic Center, 1 Whitecliffs Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 646-7725; houghdm@yahoo.com.

BEST SURF SPOT

Blackies

On your average day during the year, Blackies in Newport Beach is a longboarder's haven. The waves are usually 1 to 3 feet high, the atmosphere in the water relaxed, and the old guys are chatty. It's the sort of place to which you bring a beginner to learn. There's a parking lot, which makes it accessible, and a row of shops, ideal for a morning breakfast burrito and coffee. That's the usual Blackies. But Blackies on a significant western swell? That's a completely different discussion, as Blackies transforms into one of the best waves in Orange County. The peaks are scattered, and lefts and rights are plentiful. When those classic days come, the "longboarder wave" criticisms cease. Shortboarders flock from Newport's upper streets and Huntington Beach. Because of the bend in the coastline, when Blackies is pumping, it usually means the rest of Newport doesn't have much to work with. It doesn't happen all that often, but on those rare days, aside from the usual crowd factor, Blackies is the place to be. Between the 28th Street jetty and the

BEST NOT-SO-SECRET 'SECRET' SURF SPOT

Newport Pier, Newport Beach.

READERS' CHOICE: TRESTLES

El Morro

Any surf spot visible from Pacific Coast Highway can't rationally be called a "secret spot." And yet, any time a shot from El Morro shows up in a magazine or an online slideshow identifying the spot, feelings get hurt and tempers flare. Maybe the secret-spot status came because you had to know which swells made the waves work or the fact that it required a bit of a walk, but for the most part, El Morro is a horribly kept secret. What gives the spot its renown is just how photogenic the waves can be. The waves are so-so, presenting a marginally makeable barrel for the more advanced surfer. A parking lot was built across the street, and umbrellas have begun to frequent this now-accessible piece of coastline south of Crystal Cove. Maybe those in search of a secret spot in Orange County will try to find one that people don't actually know about.

Between Corona del Mar and Laguna Beach.

BEST ACTUAL SECRET SURF SPOT

We Can't Make It That Easy Hint: It's near the place where the friars roam. (Maybe this spot is real, or maybe it's meant to send you on a never-ending search for a place that doesn't exist. Consider that nearly the entire coastline is developed and most every secret spot has been exposed. Live with it. Or maybe this one actually exists—we'll never tell.)

BEST CHEAP THRILL (UNLESS YOU GET A TICKET)

Rock Jumping In Corona del Mar As with venturing into Mexico or taking a Pirate Shot (if you have to ask, you're not ready for it!), rock-jumping in Corona del Mar comes with its fair share of risks: 1) You have to be able to find the spot, which is the easy part; head south from Little Corona and look for the rock bridge. 2) You need to be capable of handling yourself (swimming, understanding tides, reading wave swells) in the ocean while wearing shoes. 3) For the payoff, you need to willingly throw yourself off a 20-foot ledge. Oh, and if you're caught by lifeguards (who rarely pass through) or police (even rarer), you can get a ticket. Not enough to scare you off? Well, don't say we didn't warn you.

BEST WEEKEND GETAWAY

Avalon

Hop aboard the Catalina Express from either Dana Point or Long Beach for a quick boat trip to the island's small townor take an exhilarating helicopter ride over. The entrance to Avalon Harbor looks like a mini-Mediterranean island, with its quaint buildings nestled in the sides of lush hills overlooking the ocean—in fact, most hotels, restaurants and houses come with an ocean view. The island's laid-back charm seems worlds away from bustling Orange County, though the actual distance is a mere 26 miles. Avalon's main tourist area is spread across the bay's small beach, which has an astonishing bar-persquare-foot density-drinking establishments are practically stacked on top of one another. Don't forget to indulge in one of the island's signature cocktails, the Buffalo Milk, a creamy concoction of Kahlua, vodka and banana. Of course, there's also hiking, golfing and kayaking for you more active types.

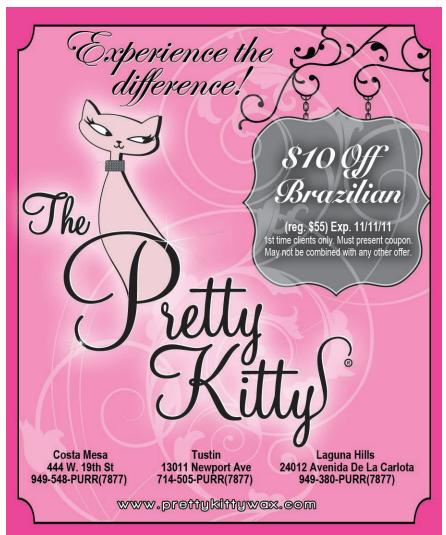
www.catalina.com, www.catalinaexpress.com.

BEST DAY TRIP

Santa Monica

Sure, LA traffic is pretty terrifying and rather predictable (there's never a good time to head north out of Orange County), but if you're willing to stick it out, there is a way to spend the day in that county that doesn't involve taking a tour of movie stars' homes or shopping on Rodeo Drive. Hello, Santa Monica. Yes, you're still in jeopardy of a celebrity sighting or two (or perhaps a mob boss on the lam, who knows?), but this town has





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more character to offer its visitors. Start with the Santa Monica Pier, the granddaddy of all California piers, with a roller coaster, trapeze school, aquarium, restaurants, arcade games and more. Then visit the Third Street Promenade for live music and theater, art galleries, and street performers. You'll definitely be hungry at this point, which means a trip to Santa Monica's Main Street for Finn McCool's Irish Pub. In honor of her late stepfather, owner Geraldine Gilliland arranged for his pub in Ireland to be dismantled and shipped to Santa Monica in 2001, so she could re-create it. Most of the staff hail from Ireland, and the potato skins are so famous they even earned a segment on the Travel Channel. This one-of-a-kind pub alone is worth the wait in traffic to get to Santa Monica.

READERS' CHOICE: SAN DIEGO

BEST PARK

Pearson Park

Located in the heart of Anaheim, Pearson Park is well-known to generations of Anaheimers, who take all of its treasures for granted. But if you haven't been, you're missing out on one of the more charming expanses of open space in the county, one that even drew in Huell Howser a couple of years ago. Whether it's tennis courts, oldschool baseball diamonds, a garden featuring hundreds of cacti, a WPA-era statue of Madame Helena Modjeska, the historic amphitheater (hosting concert series again after decades of disuse) and ponds, Pearson Park is a great place to relax, play, grill carne asada, or just take peaceful strolls. And given it's just down the street from the police station, there's never any worry of bad guys messing up your evening. Imagine that—a stroll in the park in Anaheim that doesn't involve Disnevland!

401 N. Lemon St., Anaheim, (714) 765-5155.

BEST PARK FOR KIDS

Pioneer Road Park

When it gets hot in inland Tustin-and it gets very hot in inland Tustin in the summer-families flock to Pioneer Road Park, a developed park sandwiched between Peters Canyon Park and the 261 toll road. It's a rare space that can offer parents an entire day with the kids. Start on the halfsized basketball court or play volleyball in the fields. Younger varmints can pretend to be Roy Rogers and Dale Evans and clamber up the Old West-style covered wagons, then have a picnic lunch at the tables. The highlight in the summer is the "water-feature play area"; better known as a splash pad, it's a lot like an oversized mall fountain with low-speed water cannons that runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.. allowing the little ones (and parents) to cool off before heading home, plumb tuckered out.

10250 Pioneer Rd., Tustin.

BEST DOG PARK

Pooch Park

We had an inside source for this one. In a chain-link-fenced corner of Fullerton's

Pooch Park, a dog going by the pseudonym "Bo" dished the lowdown on the hounds and grounds. Away from his master's ear, "Bo" whispered slyly that he comes mostly "for the bitches." (Dogs in heat are not allowed on the premises, so he and other horndogs have to play it cool.) Located next to the Hunt Branch Library, Pooch Park is a hidden architectural jewel (really, it's hard to find!) that boasts three designated areas for big and small dogs alike to unleash and unwind. For his part, when his wandering eye doesn't have his tongue hanging out, "Bo" likes to run around in the area reserved for larger dogs as well as the chip park. Owners speak well of the communal effort to keep the space clean by picking up after pets, as well as of the open hours (Thursday to Tuesday, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.). There is also a political appeal: Leaning well to the left of Blue Dog Democrats, "Bo," who declined to disclose his breed, says few conservative owners and their hounds bother coming around. Created by the Fullerton Parks and Recreation Commission in June 2007, Pooch Park is city property, and "Nothing makes the tax-crazy hawks in Fullerton howl more," he says, "than the sight of a dog like me squeezing out some kibbles 'n' bits on their dime!"

201 S. Basque Ave., Fullerton.

BEST PLACE TO MASSAGE A HISTORIC SURFBOARD

Surfing Heritage Foundation Try asking attendants at the Louvre to let you stroke Mona Lisa's face and see where that gets you. At the Surfing Heritage Foundation, not only can you put your hands on some of the oldest, most expensive surfboards in existence, but you can also massage them from top to bottom—if you can reach the top of a 16-foot olo. The Surfing Heritage Foundation is surfers' Cooperstown; visiting hours run from 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Boards here date back to the 1900s, and the collection continues to grow. We're told a new, larger, more accessible location is in the works.

110 Calle Iglesia, San Clemente, (949) 388-0313; www.surfingheritage.org.

BEST SHOOTING RANGE

On Target

Whether you're a hunting god who can hit a target from hundreds of yards away, or a skittish newbie seeking a thrill, this is where you should spend your time. Located in a big, beige, rectangular building sandwiched between Interstate 5 and the train tracks on Camino Capistrano. On Target boasts 20 lanes, with ranges that go up to 25 yards. You can get a lane for 16 bucks and stay as long as you want; 50 rounds of ammo runs from \$14 to \$19. And, if you don't want to shoot on your own, On Target also offers an array of classes. There's a merit-badge class for Boy Scouts and a self-defense class. And On Target hosts a special class limited



to women. For the \$75, three-hour crash course in personal safety, ladies only have to bring a pair of closed-toe shoes and just enough angst; On Target will provide the ammo, guns and targets. Aside from offering stellar classes, On Target also serves as a one-stop, everything-youneed-to-know-about-guns shop: lots of firearms and other goodies for sale; tons of brochures on display to keep customers apprised of what exactly they can and can't do legally; and, just in case you get yourself in a sticky situation, business cards for "The California Gun Attorney" are available. On the way out of the range, alongside pretty pink flowers, imprints of guns on the sidewalk bid customers farewell.

27692 Camino Capistrano, Laguna Niguel, (949) 348-0352; www.on-targetrange.com.

BEST RIDE AT DISNEYLAND

Mad Tea Party

It's officially called the Mad Tea Party, but everyone knows it as the "teacups." Forget freaking Space Mountain—or even California Screamin', for that matter. To show people vou're made of sterner stuff. head for the Alice In Wonderland-inspired ride that "re-creates the film's 'unbirthday' sequence featuring the Mad Hatter and March Hare's chaotic tea party." Most people either love it or hate it-there's really no middle ground for this ride, the obvious reason being that you need to be pretty nausea-proof to stomach sitting in twirling teacups placed on three separate turntables, which are all teetering on an even larger turntable. Because of its polarizing nature, there's never a very long wait (each of the 18 pastel teacups fits five people), and if you don't particularly like whom you're sitting with, you can spin your cup as fast as you can-as long as you don't lose vour lunch.

Disneyland, 1313 S. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 781-7290; disneyland.disney.go.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: SPACE MOUNTAIN

BEST PLACE TO HOLD A DODGE-BALL TOURNAMENT

Sky High Sports

It is time to rekindle those elementaryschool dodge-ball skills because Sky High Sports has reinvented the classic schoolyard game. A specially designed facility, one of the only locations of its kind on the West Coast, decked out with wall-to-wall trampolines and padding, Sky High Sports is the dream playground for every hyperactive kid (and adult). There are three arenas open for free bounce, twists, flips and other extreme sports every day of the week, but dodge ball is king. Here, the game has been re-defined with new conventions such as the "air attack" and the "bounce, twist and dodge" maneuver. Join in on a 15-versus-15 free-play game during the day, get a group of officemates to compete in the monthly tournaments, or rent a private court. If you're looking for a

more mature crowd to compete against, avoid the daytime horde of teenage kids and birthday-party attendees. Tired of jumping? Cool down with some refreshments from the concession counter and hit some of the arcade games scattered around the arena. Individual jumpers can go to town for \$10 per hour, or pay \$66 per tournament team.

2970 Airway Ave., Costa Mesa, 714-437-JUMP; OCY.jumpskyhigh.com.

BEST PLACE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR INNER EINSTEIN

238 Shop

Hackerspaces are a global phenomenon, and OC has its very own in this collective of Fullerton-based tinkerers that loves to tear shit up, then build new shit. From computer repair and clownjousting battle gear to marine radios and mobile DJ units, there's very little that can't be made, fixed or salvaged in the 1,800-square-foot space, which includes an arsenal of tools and heavy machinery ranging from welders to lathes. With members as creative as they are capable, the collective was chosen by Red Bull to participate in its inaugural Red Bull Creation in July, a 72-hour build-off featuring 10 hackerspaces that didn't know what they would be building until the night before the competition. To build a transportation device that could carry at least 100 pounds of human weight without the use of fossil fuels, 23B cobbled together a teeter-totter that, through its kinetic energy, powered a video game that could be played by two riders. The entry didn't win, but thanks to garnering more Facebook likes than any other project, 23B wound up getting a state-of-the-art welder. The collective is a private group funded by dues, and though it's not open to the general public, it hosts regular meet-and-greet potlucks.

418 E. Commonwealth Ave., Ste. 1, Fullerton; shop.23b.org.

BEST THEATER AT WHICH TO FIND AN EARLY MATINEE SEAT

AMC Tustin 14 at the District Hate the bright cell-phone lights that pop up in the darkness at movie theaters? Jerks yakking as though they're at home watching a DVD? Love the communal experience of going to films so much that sitting at home and being a Netflix junkie isn't enough? Our solution? Matinees at AMC Tustin 14 at the District. We have no idea why-other than to assume the unruly masses must sleep in after a rough night of carousing—but not only are the pre-noon shows cheaper than those after, but they're also blissfully free of assholes. Every time we've attended, the audience has been polite, non-texting, non-glowing and . . . quiet. Doesn't make a difference if it's the latest blockbuster, 3D, foreign or indie. Silence is golden.

2457 Park Ave., Tustin, (888) AMC-4FUN; www.amctheatres.com/Tustin.









BEST OUTDOOR DINING

The Beachcomber

If your own-of-town guests are keen on experiencing quintessential Orange County, take them to the Beachcomber. Here, they'll marvel at a prototypical OC scene: brunching trophy wives toasting one another on snatching deep-pocketed sugar daddies. Oh, the view of the beach is nice, too; reservations for the summer season are booked fast. What surrounds the beachside shack eatery is a post card come to life. The food is hardly the point. But if it is true that a hot dog eaten at the Grand Canyon tastes as good as a steak, the same concept applies here. The sunsets, the idyllic beach huts and the crashing surf cresting on sand just steps from the entrance are seasonings more essential than salt. \$\$

15 Crystal Cove, Newport Coast, (949) 376-6900; www.thebeachcombercafe.com.

BEST WATERFRONT DINING

SOL Cocina

Dropped daintily on Pacific Coast Highway above Newport Bay is SOL Cocina, an elegant establishment dedicated to bringing the flavors of Baja to Orange County. But this is cuisine with a conscience. The environmentally friendly menu boasts low-fat, healthy items, and almost everything is gluten-free. The chefs use only sustainable fish and humanely raised beef and pork—and many dishes can be made vegetarian or even vegan. Try one of their exquisitely crafted margaritas (we love the cucumber jalapeño), any of about a dozen different salsas and definitely the taco vampiro. Snag a seat at one of the copper tables on the patio for a luxurious view of the boats, docks and houses you'll never afford. We recommend going at sunset, when the water turns as gold as the tequila in your glass. \$\$\$

251 Pacific Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (949) 675-9800; www.solcocina.com. REFIDERS' CHOICE: DUKE'S HUNTINGTON BEFICH

BEST CULINARY EXPERIMENTALIST

Dave Emery

What haven't we said about Dave Emery that hasn't already been said? The man is an all-around crazy person—and we mean that with the utmost respect. He insists on making everything he serves at Sol Del Sur Bistro from scratch and doing it all himself, with no assistance from a sous chef or even a dishwasher. All evidence suggests he is self-taught and loves to cook just as most people like to breathe. He has working knowledge of Italian, Japanese, French and Spanish cuisines, gleaned from his travels and bolstered by the undying curiosity of a child. The menu he attempts is formidable and frenetic. When the small

READERS' »YOU WON!! POLL

BEST DUTDOOR DINING The Beachcomber BEST WATERFRONT DINING **Duke's Huntington Beach** BEST NEW RESTRURANT True Food Kitchen BEST RESTRURENT Seasons 52 BEST RESTRURANT WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS PRYING Mastro's Ocean Club BEST LATE-NIGHT DINING Harbor House Café BEST DINER Ruby's Diner BEST SERFOOD RESTRURANT The Crab Cooker BEST VEGETHRIAN/ VEGAN RESTAURANT Native Foods Café BEST SUNDRY BRUNCH Las Brisas BEST VIETNAMESE RESTRURANT Bodhi Tree Vegetarian Café BEST THÁI RESTAURANT Royal Thai Cuisine BÉST JAPANESE RESTRURANT Matsu BEST SUSHI RA Sushi BEST MIDDLE ERSTERN RESTRURANT Marrakesh BEST ITALIAN RESTRURANT Roman Cucina BEST INDIAN RESTRURANT

RESTRURANT Avila's El Ranchito BEST CHINESE RESTRURANT P.F. Chang's China Bistro BEST TACO Chronic Tacos BEST PHO Pho 99 Vietnamese Restaurant BEST HAMBURGER In-N-Out BEST DESSERT Chocolate soufflé at Roy's BEST CUPCRKE Casey's Cupcakes BEST PIZZA Gina's Pizza and Pastaria BEST BURRITO Chipotle BEST HOT DOG Jerry's Wood-Fired Dogs BEST FRENCH FRIES Memphis Café **BEST BREWERY** Newport Beach Brewing Co. BEST BAKERY 85°C Bakery BEST DELI Jerry's Famous Deli BEST NEW-RGE FOOD TRUCK Seabirds BEST FARMERS' MARKET Irvine Farmers' Market at UC Irvine BEST BAGELS Bruegger's BEST ICE CREAM Rite Aid/Thrifty's Ice Cream BEST COFFEE Kéan Coffee BEST COFFEEHOUSE Kéan Coffee

BEST MEXICAN

room he calls a restaurant is even halffull, he can be easily overwhelmed with orders. He creates a list of a dozen or so appetizers, traipsing borders and using uncommon ingredients, such as crosnes, aji amarillo and uni. His entrées are bold, complex and, at times, beguiling. As of this writing, he is serving grilled strawberries with lamb shanks braised in lavender and honey; by the time you read this, though, that dish will be history. Emery is never satisfied: He thinks of new ways to challenge himself and his customers; and he's been known to introduce a new dish one night and jettison it

the next. Don't even try to convince him

Natraj's Tandoori

to edit his menu down or ask him to be less ambitious. We like our mad scientist just the way he is. \$\$\$
31115 Rancho Viejo Rd., San Juan Capistrano, (949) 487-5225; soldelsurbistro.com.

BEST NEW RESTRURANT

Chapter Dne: the modern local Former Haven Gastropub partner Jeff Hall throws down the gauntlet with Chapter One, a challenge to not only his former colleagues, but also his neighbors at Santa Ana's burgeoning restaurant scene. The bar pours old-man drinks with equal jiggers of expertise

and knowledge of the mixological arts. It's also up-to-date on the local beers. Meanwhile, chef Oge Dalken, a culinary raconteur in a city full of them, brings humor and lightness to dishes that are as fun to eat as they are to order. A beef culotte inspires other chefs to do better with bacon-wrapped steaks. And for a dessert called "Milk & Cereal," the breakfast food of our youths is deconstructed and reinterpreted: Panna cotta becomes the milk, and crispy Greek kataifi plays cereal. You have to order it to get the joke and realize that the culinary punch line is as delicious as the setup. \$\$

227 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 352-2225; chapteronetml.com.

READERS' CHOICE: TRUE FOOD KITCHEN

BEST RESTRURANT

The Crosby

Okay, so its service can sometimes be spotty, the music is usually a bit too loud, and forget about enjoying yourself after 9 p.m., when the hipsters invade and it becomes a shrine to PBR imbibing. But the culinary talents exhibited at the Crosby, in those precious few hours when it's functioning as a bona fide restaurant, are almost too good for Orange County, thanks to constant experimentation by chef Aron Habiger, who possesses a fearlessness better suited to a skydiving instructor. He's more than happy to let his underlings mess with the menu, and the Crosby kids can wow you with a decadent steak, a sandwich constructed from honest-to-goodness headcheese, or weekly specials that disappear forever, living on only in legend. (Did you ever try the carnitas tostada topped with Sri Lankan-style coconut sambol?) Even more impressively, Habiger is committed to creating a food culture in OC; earlier this year, he hosted the first OC happy-hour event of KCRW-FM 89.9's Good Food With Evan Kleiman, following that up by turning over his kitchen for a night to Dee Nguyen of Break of Dawn (last year's Best Restaurant winner). Habiger promises more of such events in the months to come—and, as always, the food will not only impress, but also genuinely wow. \$\$

400 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 543-3543; www.thisisthecrosby.com.

READERS' CHOICE: SEASONS S2

BEST SERVICE IN A RESTAURANT

Old Vine Café

Old Vine is no stranger to these pages, having won Best Restaurant in 2009-and it has broadened its ambitions since then, hosting wine nights and even leading culinary tours of Italy. But the attention of brothers Mark and Brandon McDonald to the homefront hasn't suffered: You still see Brandon every morning through night, guiding customers old and new through the menu, maybe suggesting an omelet or the seasonal four-course chef's menu, and with a memory of the café's hundreds of wines that borders on That's Incredible! territory. Mark is almost as present on the floor, even though he's manning the kitchen, trading jokes with customers and making sure their experiences are always spectacular. Such attention to detail doesn't come



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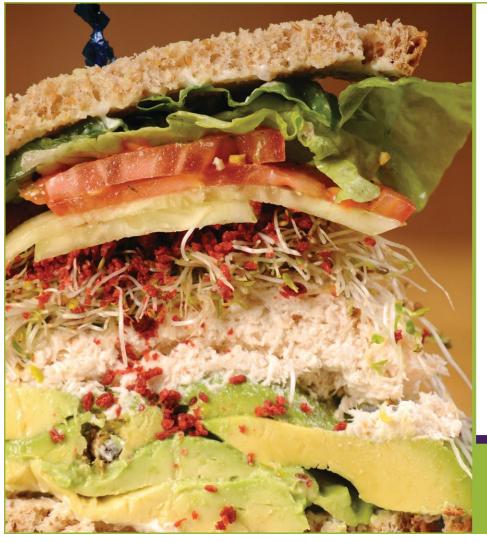




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out of economic survival or even hipster irony, but rather the McDonalds' honestto-goodness enthusiasm for great food. They are redeeming their surname in the food industry. \$\$\$

2937 Bristol St., Ste. A102, Costa Mesa, (714) 545-1411; www.oldvinecafe.com.

BEST PLACE TO OGLE THE WAITSTAFF

Hapa J's

Service with a smile is nice—but it's better if that smile is bleached white and framed by lip-gloss. The waitresses at Hapa J's are catalog-ready at all times, with effortlessly manicured nails, glossy hair and sun-kissed skin; they're what all of Orange County should look like, if everyone was an extra from, well, The O.C. But the servers here are also quick, efficient and attentive, constantly filling cups, bussing tables and asking you how you're doing, so expect to see a lot of your server (which is a good thing—more time to gawk). Best of all, the Hawaiian fusion nosh is delicious—opt for the New Spicy Poke Bowl (\$5.99), in which fresh, cubed, sashimi-grade ahi tuna is topped with sesame seasoning and spicy aioli, then served alongside macaroni potato saladand will give your mouth something to do other than babbling incoherently at your perky waitress. \$\$

2016 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente, (949) 276-6657; hapajs.com.

BEST RESTRURANT WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS PAYING

You know you're in it for a few Benjamins when you see the view from your table inside the Ritz-Carlton hotel. It is a soaring panorama of the Pacific Ocean to which only cruise ship passengers are usually privy. But the food is also worth the money. If not yours, then someone who's willing to admit it is a better investment in alta cocina fare than anything the Rick Baylesses and Susan Fenigers of the world have to offer. First, Richard Sandoval, the mastermind behind this and other similarly upscale restaurants, is actually from Mexico. Those who think this shouldn't matter need to taste his corn soup, which can be a revelatory slurp akin to the first time you had a perfect rib-eye or seared foie gras. The CIA-trained Mexico City native does it all, beginning with that soup. And he doesn't gussy up Mexican cuisine's indigenous ingredients like oddities just to prove he knows about them. Instead, he uses them as matter-of-fact jumpingoff points for his own brand of haute cuisine that just happens to feature a Mexican flavor profile. Herewith is proof that "expensive Mexican cuisine" isn't a contradiction in terms and that huitlacoche does, indeed, work well with braised short rib. \$\$\$\$

1 Ritz-Carlton Dr., Dana Point, (949) 240-2000; www.ritzcarlton.com.

READERS' CHOICE: MASTRO'S DEERN CLUB

Peoz Pizza

The best restaurants for kids are the kind where it doesn't matter if they run around like, well, kids. Pepz (yes, with a Z) is a throwback to pizza parlors of old, where the little ones can disappear into the small arcade in the back. On weekends, each of the branches of this OC-only mini-chain is full of sport teams and activity clubs. The pizza and salads are good fare for the family, and when the noise level gets too crazy, there's beer and wine with which the adults can drown their sorrows. \$\$

646 S. Brookhurst St., Anaheim, (714) 991-6450; 6304 E. Santa Ana Canyon Rd., Anaheim, (714) 637-1920; 726 S. State College Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 991-9900; 165 S. Harbor Blvd., La Habra, (562) 501-2222; 732 N. Rose Dr., Placentia, (714) 572-2100; 20355 Yorba Linda Blvd., Yorba Linda, (714) 777-4440; www.pepzpizza.com.

BEST RESTRURANT/ ART GALLERY FUSION

2nd Floor

There are several art forms, and 2nd Floor rolls them into one. Primarily providers of culinary art, its walls are lined with paintings from local artists, and it often hosts live music. All of the art featured in its monthly art shows is for sale, with all profits going to the artist. Perched atop the shops of Main Street in Huntington Beach on, yes, the second floor, it serves some of the most innovative foods you'll find. The 99 percent from-scratch kitchen offers such delights as Zeppelin poppers-cream cheesefilled jalapeños wrapped in bacon, then deep fried and covered with a raspberry sauce. Its pride and joy are the Colossal Burgers, a full pound of food between two buns, with toppings ranging from onion rings to mashed potatoes. One is about the size of your head! Though each one carries a \$16 price tag, there's more than enough for two, even three people to share. And every Wednesday is Classical Carnage night, featuring a group of musicians playing songs ranging from Bach to rock in the classical style, with 25 percent of the dinner sales supporting youth music programs. All of this makes 2nd Floor an exceptional example of the wonders that happen when the culinary and fine arts unite. \$\$\$

126 Main St., Huntington Beach, (714) 969-9000; www.2ndfloorhb.com.

BEST PLACE TO GET SOME WORK DONE

Monkey House Café

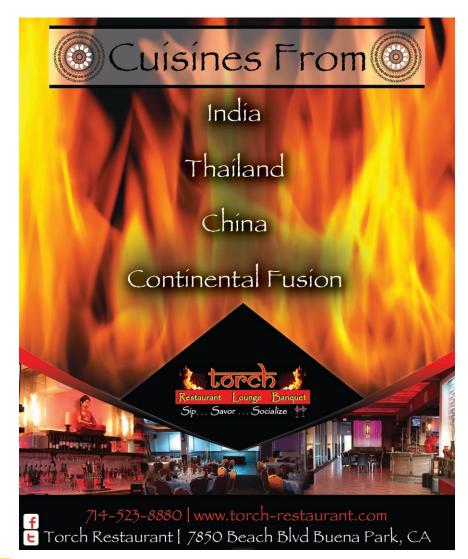
At this sprawling, family-run coffeehouse and café, the menu is your usual farecoffee drinks, deli and grilled sandwiches, salads, soups, and pastries-though tasty and affordably priced (the delicious Funky Monkey espresso/chocolate/ banana blended drink costs less than \$4). But this is also an unexpected haven for those needing to get some work done on the ol' laptop. The WiFi is free, and







Minutes from South Coast Plaza & 55 Fwy







there's an abundance of seating nooks and workspaces throughout the place—couches, tables, lounge seats, stools and bar seating. There's also a massive fake tree in the middle of the store from which toy monkeys hang—in case you need a little diversion. \$\$

18862 Beach Blvd., Ste. 101, Huntington Beach, (714) 965-1135; www.monkeyhousecafe.com.

BEST ROMANTIC RESTAURANT

ЯпДі

Though the elegant Charlie Palmer next door at South Coast Plaza is also a strong contender, around here, we like our romantic dining to offer at least a hint of what's supposed to happen after dinner. And if the dark, voluptuous embrace of AnQi doesn't feel sexy to you, check your pulse. Elizabeth An-daughter of Helene An of Crustacean fame-knows what's up: She put the word "naughty" in her menu statement, and the luxurious setting delivers on that promise, with its varying textures and grains of the wood paneling, lush fabrics, and translucent walls surrounding the "secret" dining area. Even during the brightly lit lunchtime, this some-Vietnamese-butalso-other-Asian eatery is an unabashed vamp. Maybe it's just us, but the hottest element in the whole space is the carved, solid-wood dining chairs, so lovingly formed they look like they grew into that shape. The staff are attentive and good-natured without being overly familiar and can be counted on to help you feel good about yourself. Ladies, if you wear some killer shoes, the hostesses will give you a shout-out. (They should know: They probably see a lot of fashion shows on the restaurant's runway.) And of course, the food is excellent. The signature An's Famous Garlic Noodles are deceptively simple, with a delicate, almost-haunting umami that makes them addictive. And if P.F. Chang's has ruined the lettuce wrap for you, AnQi's ssam wraps, especially the kurobuta pork belly version, will restore your faith in the power of contrasting tastes, temperatures and textures in your mouth. But please don't eat the things with a knife and fork. Really, really not sexy. \$\$\$\$ 3333 S. Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 557-5679; www.angibistro.com.

BEST RESTAURANT DECOR

True Food Kitchen

Should a bee ever make it inside True Food Kitchen, it would be thoroughly confused. Here is a restaurant that could be the Newport Beach outpost of the Secret Garden. The hostess' podium is a sculpted topiary. The fresh fruits aren't just decoration; they're also functional, ending up as blender fodder for smoothies. As in a greenhouse, sunlight floods in, nourishing both the plants and the customers. Lemon-striped seats flow into lime-hued walls. Though dining inside the place might call for an Allegra, it'll

sure cheer up those suffering from seasonal affective disorder with a curative dose of summer and spring. The food has the same sunny disposition, served in bowls that look as though they're made of earthenware. Eaten in this space, the bright chopped chicken salad with jicama, dates and cranberries could drive antidepressants into obsolescence. \$\$
451 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 644-2400; www.truefoodkitchen.com.

BEST WORST-KEPT SECRET

The Secret Spot

Squirreled away in a run-down strip mall and blocked from sight by a car wash is the Secret Spot. Despite its name, the lunchtime rush usually draws a packed patio and a persistent line that extends well past the doorway; Huntington Beach locals seem to either love the place or have never heard of it, but the number of those in the know continues to grow. There's good reason for it too. During summer hours, this beachside dive cooks up heaping portions of healthful grub that sticks to your ribs without delivering you to the clutches of a food coma. In addition to offering a wide selection of veg-friendly fare, breakfast is served all day and includes items from your classic ham-and-cheese omelet to vegan chocolate chip pancakes. If you go for lunch, the array of eclectic Cal-Mex offerings is enough to keep you sampling new items for weeks. They even have a separate menu for juices and smoothies. Yeah, it'll take vou forever to decide on what vou want to order, but for those who haven't stumbled upon it yet, the Secret Spot is well worth discovering. \$\$

3801 Warner Ave., Ste. B, Huntington Beach, (562) 592-4494.

BEST LATE-NIGHT DINING

BCD Tofu House

One of the few 24-hour, sit-down restaurants in Irvine not named Denny's or Norms, BCD Tofu House is a haven for UC Irvine students on an all-night Korean-food bender. Its two 24-hour locations (Irvine's Diamond Jamboree and Garden Grove's Koreatown) are known for magma-hot, stone pots of spicy soon tofu, stews loaded with spicy chili powder and meat. Choose the spice level, from a mild broth with no chili powder to a devil-red spicy broth that'll make you sweat like a fat man in a sauna after two bites. Then choose among proteins such as beef and mixed seafood-or the house-made boiled dumplings heavily dosed with garlic. When the furiously boiling mini-cauldron arrives at your table, crack a raw egg into it. Order a Hite beer to bide your time while the egg soft-boils and the soondubu cools enough to eat. The \$8.99 bowl isn't dirtcheap by starving-student standards, but the stew arrives with enough sides to make for a giant meal. Traditional Korean side dishes of banchan (pickled vegetables) arrive with a stone crock of













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foodstuffs



steamed rice, featuring a crust of toasted rice at the bottom. Your server will scoop out the rice, then ask if you want roasted barley tea to soften the toasty rice crust. Say yes; by midmeal, you'll have a cleansing broth to balance the rich, spicy soon tofu. \$\$ 2700 Alton Pkwy., Ste. 135, Irvine, (949) 553-6465; 9520 Garden Grove Blvd., Ste. 9, Garden Grove, (714) 636-5599; www.bcdtofu.com.

READERS' CHOICE: HARBOR

HOUSE CRFÉ

BEST REASON TO WAIT FOR HOURS AT THE COSTA MESA DMV

Taco Mesa Across the Street Any joy left in your being will get sucked right out of you in the DMV waiting area in Costa Mesa. All you have to hold on to is the knowledge you will one day (or week?) leave the place, rewarding your patience across the street. That is where one finds the culinary oasis that is the original Taco Mesa. Inside a funky taquería that was once a Taco Bell, the brothers Calderon bring a gourmet flair to traditional Mexican favorites such as tacos, burritos and enchiladas that has been appreciated by everyone from Sunset Magazine scribes to, well, DMV survivors. Indeed, nothing brings balance to one's car-registration-frazzled being like Taco Mesa's blackened-chicken taco: two warm tortillas piled high with shredded cabbage, hunks of blackened chicken and a tasty homemade salsa that screams Albuquerque. Inventive daily specials lean heavy on freshly netted fish and crustaceans and-special bonus for vegetarians-just as much care and flavor go into the meatless offerings here. It's enough to make you cheer that suspended-license notice in the mail. \$\$

647 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0629; www.tacomesa.net. Non-DMV-adjacent locations in Orange, Mission Viejo and Ladera Ranch.

BEST PLACE

McClain's Coffeehouse

Remember that monumental coffeehouse explosion in the 1990s? Though the era of Nirvana witnessed big-box coffee brewers making their march toward global domination, there was plenty of competition from smaller mom-and-pop operations. Indie spots such as Rock 'N Java and Gypsy Den offered patrons the quality of corporate coffee with the pre-Hipstamatic ambiance of an alternativemusic venue. Though Starbucks' dominion is now near-total, there are still a few staunch hold-outs carrying the torch for indie connoisseurs. McClain's resides near downtown Fullerton in an early-20th-century craftsman home that was formerly a Rock 'N Java. Though it boasts lots of cool pluses—good-lookin' baristas, live music, walls adorned with the work of local artists—the operation's heart is the large patio between the front of the

building and Harbor Boulevard. A prime socializing zone, here is where small clans of people huddle around large tables under powerful space heaters and play rummy or backgammon while sipping quality Joe or smoking bogies or the occasional Sherlock Holmes pipe. There is a communal spirit on that porch that fosters friendly interaction between total strangers. McClain's is open till the wee hours of the morning, making it a perfect stop for revelers leaving the downtown bar area in need of a caffeine pick-me-up before work. \$

817 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 525-5282; mcclainscoffeehouse.com.

BEST DINER

Harbor House Café Run by the colorful, free-spirited Gary Quick, Sunset Beach's charming redand-white café is perched in the shadow of the city's historic water tower; it's the place for artists, nomads, surfers, students and tourists hankering for a heaping plate of tasty American fare at any hour. With wood-paneled walls dripping with memorabilia—vintage movie posters, surfboards, signed jerseys-the coastal diner is as much about its quirky, cozy atmosphere and everybody-knowsvour-name service as it is about food. But don't discount the food. The 10-page menu is crammed with can't-go-wrong items, from the gargantuan omelets (try the chorizo for \$9.65 or Canadian crab for \$12.85) to the handmade milkshakes served in a mondo malt cup (\$4.95). \$\$ 16341 Pacific Coast Hwy., Sunset Beach, (562) 592-5404; 34157 Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point, (949) 496-9270; www.harborhousecafe.com.

READERS' CHOICE: RUBY'S DINER

BEST SERFOOD ÄËSTAURANT

The Winery

When three diners order different fish entrées, each of which come out perfectly executed, you'd expect to be sitting in a seafood-only specialty spot. The Winery actually has as much red meat on the menu as fish and shellfish, but the kitchen sources amazing seafood and executes each dish with masterful skill. The seared Mediterranean branzino, for instance, is a skin-on filet of sea bass with a crisp, lightly charred skin that balances the texture of that fish's rich flesh. Its juices meld with a pinot noir reduction sauce, house-made fettucine and roasted vegetables. The Winery's principals received their fine-dining pedigrees from Morton's and the Ritz-Carlton, so unsurprisingly, it's an expense-account type of place, with a wine-driven menu staffed by diligently trained professional servers. What is surprising, though, is the elegantly designed room looks like it belongs in Newport Coast, not a Tustin mega-mall. \$\$\$\$

2647 Park Ave., Tustin, (714) 258-7600; www.thewineryrestaurant.net. READERS' CHOICE: THE CRAB COOKER

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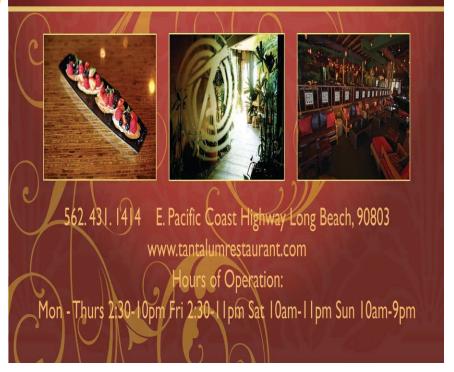
Village at Orange Saladworks 1500 East Village Way Ste 2197 Orange, CA 92865

Newport Mesa Saladworks 488 E. 17th Street Costa Mesa, CA 92627 | 949.646.0800 www.saladworks.com | www.socalsaladworks.com

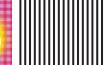












BEST STERKHOUSE

Agora Churrascaria

After you've had your fill of steakhouses and their boring slabs of meat, Agora will show you how steak should be done: impaled on metal swords, served by sash-wearing gauchos and offered as an all-you-can-eat. Except maybe the Argentineans, no one can match the Brazilians' love of beef. And in Orange County, no restaurant demonstrates the expression of that love better than Agora. This meat-a-palooza is a parade of protein only a brazen carnivore hopped up on cholesterol meds could embrace. It is a meat feast to end all meat feasts. On those sabers comes a never-ending steak procession, hunks of cow roasted over flames with nothing more than salt and respect. You'll call over the gaucho who carries the sanguine pleasures of rare sirloin more than once, asking him to carve off yet another slice. You'll pop those nuggets of filet mignon wrapped in bacon like popcorn. The restaurant also boasts an immaculate buffet line of sides. They do a mashed potato so smooth it could pass for crème fraîche. But who are you kidding? You're here for the meat, and you're going to have it, one bloody piece at a time. \$\$\$ 1830 Main St., Irvine, (949) 222-9910; www.anorachurrascaria.com

Наррц Family

When you finally tire of the narcissism and self-righteousness that pervades most vegetarian/vegan restaurants, come to Happy Family. Here, meat abstinence isn't a fashionable lifestyle choice; it's religion. Even if you don't quite buy the Buddhist sutras that forbid garlic and onion because they engender anger and irritability in mortals, you won't miss them. Besides, you could do well by being less angry and irritable these days. Whether by the power of suggestion, the things you eat here do actually put you at ease, as if you've recalibrated your karmic balance. Skip the mock meat and embrace such naturally occurring meat substitutes as oyster mushrooms. A gossamer-thin coating of batter turns them into crispy baseball-mitt-shaped morsels blessed with a meatiness akin to actual oysters. The signature fried bread—a Happy Family staple—takes on the crunchy exterior of a cake doughnut, which is the perfect foil for a blazing-hot tofu stir-fried with excessive amounts of sliced red chiles, which, thankfully, are not prohibited. \$\$ 1400 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 668-9288; www.happyfamilyvege.com.

READERS' CHOICE: NATIVE FOODS CAFÉ

BEST PLACE TO CALL A DIETARY TRUCE

Roots Gourmet

It's not easy being a public vegetarian in Orange County. More often than not, the courteous herbivore will find him- or herself constructing haphazard meals out of side dishes at omnivorous restaurants

when out with friends. It doesn't help that avid meat-eaters tend to approach dining out at an exclusively vegetarian restaurant about as enthusiastically as they would a visit to the dentist. Thankfully, Roots Gourmet has taken the initiative and created a buffer zone in which the two dietary parties can congregate without a compromise in flavor. Specializing in distinctly Mexican and Latin American cuisine, Roots offers a vegetarian counterpart to almost every item on its menu. What's more, it does so with eco-conscious flair. Whenever possible, organic and local ingredients are used to create the home-style recipes that satisfy both fang and molar. It also offers a 10 percent beverage discount for those who bike or bring in their own mugs. From the sumptuous turkey albóndigas (\$3.49-\$5.49) to the vegan "chicken" sandwich (\$7.99), everything is made from scratch with someone special in mind. Glutenintolerant? No worries. Roots has your back there, too. It's enough grub love to make eaters of all walks drop their guards and embrace one another over a plate of crisp empanadas. \$\$

6473 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 795-7668; www.rootsgourmet.com.

BEST BREAKFAST

Cappy's Cafe & Cantina

There has been a Cappy's on the north side of Pacific Coast Highway between Superior and Prospect avenues since 1957; the current owners should wear throwback jerseys-and not just because they've kept the joint grungily retro. Breakfast portions are as huge as they are delicious, which, along with the shapely and friendly waitstaff, ensures Cappy's is jammed on weekends. Start by shaking the sleep out of your eyes with a stiffly poured Bloody. You can always switch to black-as-night (and hotas-hell) coffee to wash down your hubcapsized slice of ham. Are those eggs any way you like 'em underneath that former section of Babe? Why, yes, they are. A large platter stacked high with mouth-watering pancakes will also have you delaying your diet until another morning. The prices, while not quite hearkening back to the Eisenhower administration, are reasonable for these times. And a stretch of sand on which to beach your bloated ass beckons just across PCH. \$\$

5930 W. Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (949) 646-4202; www.cappyscafe.com.

BEST SUNDAY BRUNCH

Loreley Restaurant at the Phaenix Club

Anaheim's German roots are alive and well at the Phoenix Club, a social watering hole better known for its beer tents and pretzels at Oktoberfest than its Sunday champagne brunch—which is a shame. The Sunday brunch is held in the Loreley Restaurant, a large room that nevertheless manages to not seem cavernous, and the spread in the sun-filled atrium is enormous. While it contains all of the usual brunch foods, including carved-to-order meats and eggs, bacon and toast, those are

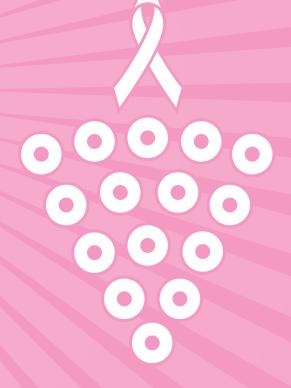


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During the month of October, RA Sushi will donate 100% of the profits from the sale of this special to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc. (NBCF), whose mission is to save lives through early detection and to provide mammograms for those in need.





ONEHOPE is a California wine company that donates 50 percent of its profits to partner nonprofits that support six distinct causes. These causes are breast cancer awareness (National Breast Cancer Foundation), AIDS research and services (AIDS/LifeCycle), Autism research and services (ACT Todayl), preservation and protection of US forests (American Forest Foundation), support for the families of fallen US soldiers (Snowball Express), and children facing injury and disease (Children's Hospitals).



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dwarfed by the German specialities: huge piles of dense bread, real brötchen (hard rolls), homemade hams and charcuterie, sauerbraten and dumplings, and an array of sausages. Don't miss the German pancakes, thin, almost-crepe-like flatbreads wrapped around sweetened, lemonscented farmer's cheese that are worth the price of admission. The Gemütlichkeit? That's free. \$\$\$

1340 S. Sanderson Ave., Anaheim, (714) 563-4166; www.thephoenixclub.com. READERS' CHOICE: LAS BRISAS

BEST MONGOLIAN BARBECUE

Great Wall Mongolian 880 Yes, pho is the current "it" dish when it comes to Asian cuisines. And some foodies might argue Mongolian barbecue is pedestrian. Who cares? It's fucking delicious. At Great Wall Mongolian BBQ in La Habra, the waitstaff are super-attentive, greeting incoming patrons with loud hellos, followed by garrulous goodbyes upon departure. But the food is the main event, and there's a lot of it for cheap. The dinner special, which runs \$6.50, is all-you-can-eat after 5 p.m. While your waiter heats some tea, head for the large, metal buffet table full of noodles, meat (thinly sliced, freeze-dried lamb, chicken and beef) and fresh vegetables. Load your bowl up with as much as it will hold before moving to the sauce trays, where you'll face a selection of soy sauce, cooking wines and oils. A large sign offers advice on flavor combinations from sweet-and-sour to savory. Food chemists can create their ideal concoction, then leave the bowl on the small kitchen window, from whence an expert chef will dump the contents onto a large, scorching-hot, flat-topped metal griddle and use a yardstick to move it all around until it's cooked. You'll find the results go well with hot tea or Tsingtao beer. \$\$ 1261 S. Harbor Blvd., Ste. A, La Habra,

BEST VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT

Ngu Binh

(714) 680-3569.

The Hue region of Vietnam is home to tinkerers, alchemists and artists who use rice flour as their chosen medium. Ngu Binh should be considered both a laboratory and a master's gallery of these arts, as its dishes are mostly rearrangements of the starch mixed into batter. Steamed in tiny saucers, they're called banh beo. Spread as thin as film and used as noodle wraps, they're called banh uot. The banh beo are eaten after they're splashed with fish sauce, scooped out by the teaspoonful as though they were cups of dessert gelatin. But they are merely blank canvases. Pulverized shrimp, shards of deep-fried onion, oil-wilted scallions and pieces of pork rind top them, applied for a genius stroke of color and a heady rush of textures. And did we mention the things are only appetizers? After you've traipsed down the rice-flour path, you'll encounter one of the finest bowls of bun

bo hue in Little Saigon. An incendiary fire-alarm-red oil slick floats atop the first few millimeters of broth, clings to every strand of the spaghetti-thick rice noodles, and coats everything it touches, from the hand-formed pork cakes to the sliced beef brisket, even the now-throbbing insides of your mouth. \$

14072 Magnolia St., Westminster, (714) 903-6000.

READERS' CHOICE: BODHI TREE VEGETARIAN CAFÉ

BEST THAT RESTAURANT

Sutha Thai Kitchen Last year, we singled out Sutha as the Best Thai Restaurant Per Square Foot; but this year, it has earned an upgrade, even though the square footage is the same. Do not take our description of its smallness as an exaggeration: Sutha can barely fit 10 people comfortably. In fact, the place feels even smaller as more people discover it. The entire restaurant, kitchen included, would fit inside Garden Grove's Thai Nakorn like a marble in a shoebox. But that's all the space it needs. Sutha has but one cook and one server, and they're related. Anywhere you sit. you hear the clangs of a wok being beaten up. Anywhere you stand, you smell what the next table is having. The salmon salad is one discovery everyone makes, but most newcomers initially ignore it, choosing instead the excellent pad see ew, silky yellow curry or pad thai, but to finally taste the salmon salad is to realize that when it comes to Thai restaurants. size doesn't matter. \$\$

1161 Irvine Blvd., Tustin, (714) 734-6100; www.suthathaikitchen.com. READERS' CHOICE: ROYAL THRI CUISINE

Каца

If you were to judge a Korean restaurant by how many varieties of complimentary panchan dishes are offered, Kaya would automatically triumph. It puts out 10 in all, while most are content in providing half that. Each item tastes of motherly effort and care. Egg enriches the cooling potato salad, the chap chae wiggles, and the stewed potato cubes taste as though they were glazed in honey. We aren't even counting the complimentary crispy Korean pancake called panjeon, which could be considered the 11th panchan side dish if it weren't actually more like an appetizer you'd order freshly made and served hot. And then there are the main dishes: iron cauldrons of sputtering soft tofu soup, searing stone bowls of bibimbap, sizzling plates of luscious kalbi. Water is refilled without asking, and servers greet you warmly as you arrive and bid you farewell as you leave. In Irvine, where there are more Korean restaurants than McDonald's, these details make all the difference. \$\$

14120 Culver Dr., Ste. G, Irvine, (949) 726-9424.

RECIPE: X114 IPA INITIAL RELEASE: 2008 BATCH SIZE: 10.0 BBL

MALT BILL

1. PALE MALT 650 LBS 2. CARAMEL 10L 100 LBS 3. CARAPILS MALT 50 LBS

HOPS

1. ALCHEMY 2.5 LBS. @ 15.4% ALPHA 90 MIN. BKO 2. CITRA Ø-MIN. BKO 7.5 LBS. @ 13.5% ALPHA 3.5 LBS. @ 13.5% ALPHA 3. CITRA DRY HOP

BKO = BEFORE END OF BOIL

ADDITIVES A

1. MASH SALTS .5 LBS. CACL2 2. KETTLE SALTS .75 LBS. CACL 3. IRISH MOSS .16 LBS.

TARGET PARAMETERS

MASH-IN 13Ø-133 °F **REST TIME** 15 MIN. **CONVERSION TEMP** 158-159 °F **REST TIME** 30 MIN.

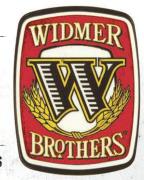
KETTLE FULL PLATO 13.8 °P FERMENTATION TEMP 66 °F .

14.3 °P ORIGINAL GRAVITY 2.5 °P TERMINAL GRAVITY (AE) BITTERNESS TARGET 5Ø IBUS ABV TARGET 6.2%

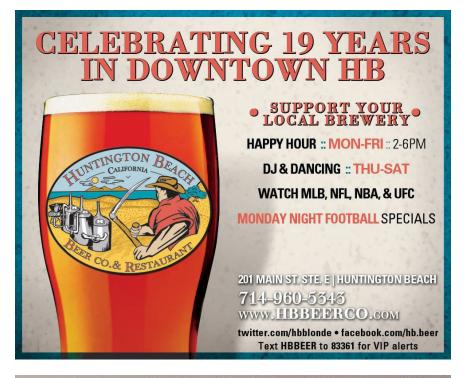
YEAST AMERICAN ALE 1056 PITCHING RATE 14 MILLION/ML

An excellent IPA shouldn't be kept secret. Brew + enjoy! Brewer, Durkell, Brewer, 1

BREWING WITHOUT BOUNDARIES



82 october 14-20, 2011







BEST JAPANESE RESTAURANT

Наьиуа

First, let's put it on the record: Habuya is an Okinawan eatery, not a Japanese one. It is true that Okinawa is a prefecture of Japan, so it's technically still Japanese food; but that's like saying a pizza from New York is the same as pizza everywhere else. Okinawa has a distinct culinary culture. Unparalleled in their love of pork and bitter melon, Okinawans have a kindred spirit in Habuya's Mayumi Vargas. She revels in satisfying homesick taste buds unserved by OC's generic Japanese joints. She sources a specialty ice-cream maker to supply a refreshing pineapple sorbet. Other indigenous dishes include chanpuru, an egg-lashed stir-fry of bitter melon that features tiny bits of Spam thanks to an omnipresent U.S. military, and ra fu te, the Okinawan variant of Japanese kakuni, which simmers with awamori, the prefecture's own rice wine. You know better than to ask for California rolls here (which, of course, aren't Japanese either). \$\$ 14215 Red Hill Ave., Tustin, (714) 832-3323. READERS' CHOICE: MATSU

BEST SUSHI

Gesshin Japanese Restuarant This eatery, whose name translates as "heart of moon," may not be as wellknown as some OC sushi powers, but it has been open for 20 years and earned a loyal following. Why? For one thing, in addition to the overall menu being actually affordable, it offers good value: There are actual chunks of tuna in the spicy tuna rolls. (Take a moment to catch your breath; we'll wait.) The quality of the fish is excellent. Even better. Hachi, the jubilant sushi chef, doubles as a wingman, helping to make sure all date nights at his bar go smoothly. For traditionalists, the live scallop sashimi is unforgettable, with the meat diced up and the shell used as a flavorful vessel for sautéed mushrooms and dashibraised onions. The rest of us will be more than happy with the "King Kobra" roll: tempura shrimp, crumbs, avocado, tuna, a tri-color of roe-everything but the kitchen sink. \$\$\$

16492 Beach Blvd., Ste. 4, Westminster, (714) 842-5581.

READERS' CHOICE: RA SUSHI

BEST STATIONARY TACO STAND FOR YOUR DRUNK ASS

Taqueria De Anda

It's 2:30 a.m., you just closed down one of the bars in Fullerton and are heading north on Harbor Boulevard in the passenger seat of your designated driver's car. Street signs are illegible, and there seems to be an extra set of dividers in the road. Yes, your head is spinning, but more pressing is the insatiable hunger gnawing at your belly—possibly for tacos. Sadly, at this hour, choices are largely limited to Del Taco, maybe Taco Bell. But adventurous North County souls with a little

extra cash in their pockets know there's another choice: Taqueria de Anda. This joint's locations in Fullerton, Orange and Santa Ana are open 24/7, ready to serve up delicious tacos perfect for the reptilian mind of the seriously inebriated. Served in small corn tortillas, there's big flavor there, courtesy of chopped carne asada, cilantro and onions, topped with spicy-ass red or green sauce. Bear in mind that one taco runs \$1.42, and a hungry drunk can easily scarf four or five. But if this is too financially overwhelming, feel free to spend your chump change on something prefabricated. Other items on the menu include burritos available with chicken or pork. The truly adventurous gourmand might also choose lengua (tongue) or cabeza (cow head). Relax, neither is worse for you than the eight Rum and Cokes filtered through your kidneys before you got here. So live a little. \$

308 W. Valencia Dr., Fullerton, (714) 871-4211; 291 N. Tustin Ave., Orange, (714) 639-1020; 1029 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 558-0856; www.taqueriadeanda.com.

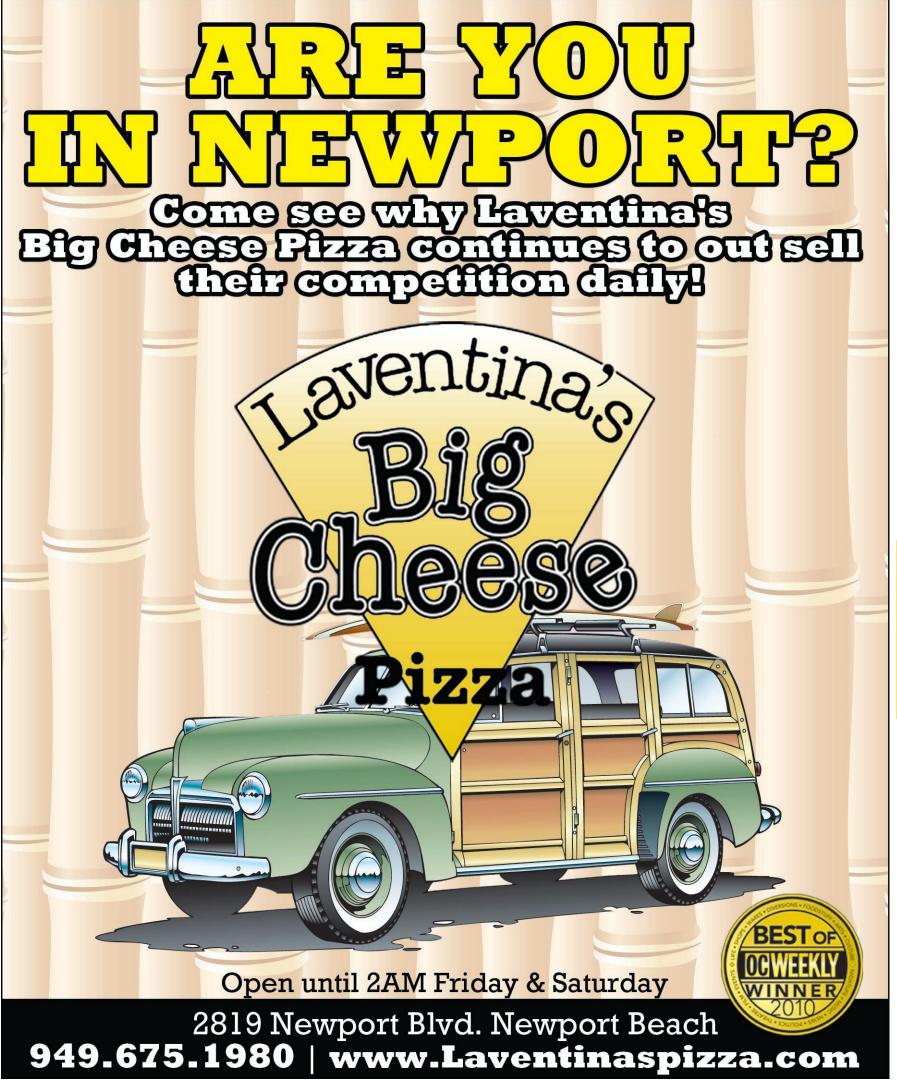
BEST HAWAIIAN BREAKFAST ON THE MAINLAND

No Ka Di

Sandwiched between Huntington Beach's Main Street breakfast staples the Sugar Shack and Longboard is the tastier, less-crowded and slightly pricier No Ka Oi, whose name says it all, translating from Hawaiian to "unparalleled" or "the best." It's a crime the Islands-inspired restaurant and watering hole is not as popular for the most important meal of the day as are the joints on either side. Ah, well, as those places' lines to enter stretch into Fountain Valley, you'll slide right into a seat at No Ka Oi. Wet your whistle with the Bloody Mary, which is worth an entry by itself. A generous pour of vodka and the owner's homemade mix are garnished with a pepper and two plump green olives stuffed with bleu cheese. You can then move on to eggs over easy, wheat toast and jam just like you can at the other places, and leave just as satisfied. But much, much better is a platter of pancakes filled with macadamia nuts and sprinkled with powdered sugar, the Kilauea Benedict that ditches Canadian bacon for fresh lump crabmeat, or the breakfast Hawaiians are most used to (other than McGriddles, of course): Loco Moco. Two scoops of white rice, an Angus beef patty and an egg over easy are drenched in a homemade gravy that's as tasty as any served in the American South, which is actually farther north than the Hawaiian Islands. If your order does not include breakfast potatoes, do yourself a favor and order them on the side. Golden brown, slightly crunchy on the outside and soft and chewy on the inside, they make a damn good meal on their own. \$\$\$ 215 Main St., Huntington Beach,

(714) 960-8300; www.nokaoirestaurant.com.

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MIDDLE ERSTERN BEST MIDULE RESTAURANT

Olive Tree

Anaheim's as-yet-undesignated Little Arabia community centers on Olive Tree, owned by Abu Ahmad, with head chef Um Alaa cooking an astounding list of uncommon Jordanian, Palestinian and Egyptian specialities. While the standard fare of meze and kebabs are available, the thing to do is ask what's in the hotel pans behind the counter. Each day, there are one or two specials, from maglooba (lamb marinated in keshek, a sour dairy product) to saya deia (marinated, grilled whole fish), from rice with 17 spices and shredded lamb to chicken stewed with onions. Everything is made from scratch, and just about everything is eye-openingly tasty. During Ramadan, the restaurant is closed during the day, but it opens at sunset with a huge buffet for iftar, the fast-breaking meal. \$\$

512 S. Brookhurst St., Ste. 3, Anaheim, (714) 535-2878.

READERS' CHOICE: MARRAKESH

BEST IDENTITY-CONFUSED CUISINE

Taco Loco

Fusion can be a loaded term when it comes to cuisine, but Taco Loco wears the adjective like a badge of honor. Incorporating Californian, Southwestern and Cajun flavors into its recipes, Taco Loco delivers deliciously innovative, yet simple renditions of Mexican fare that kick the salivary glands and tame the belly. Although this little seaside joint serves up some mean mahi mahi, the fresh ingredients and loving preparation ensure that even the vegetarian options are able to hold their own. You know a place is good when kids from the LBC cruise all the way down to South County just to inhale a few blackened-mushroom tacos. In addition to serving up wholesome nosh, Taco Loco hosts a series of specials throughout the week that make sure your wallet doesn't go hungry, too. Loco Burgers, slathered in complimentary homemade guacamole, are priced from \$4 to \$5 on Mondays, and on Loco Tuesdays, you can get tacos for less than \$2. What's more is that for two days out of the week, it's open until 2 a.m., which means you have an option to feast your face on something other than Del Taco after-hours. \$\$ 640 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-1635; www.tacoloco.net.

Cucina Alessá, Laguna Beach Alessandro Pirozzi is three-for-three. His Newport Beach original still puts out the pasta plates that established his street cred. When he built his second, the Huntington Beach Alessá, it quickly became a two-story palace to worship his mastery of the Italian food arts. Order a pizza or the butternut squash ravioli with brown butter and fried sage leaves, and you'll be bowing down like the rest of us. But with his newest restaurant in Laguna Beach,

he has outdone himself, completing a trilogy that bests The Godfather in batting average. In addition to his original menu, there's a prosciutto-and-mozzarella bar and a salad called fragole with strawberries that bursts in vibrant red and yellow. And for this third masterpiece in a series of masterpieces, a modernist crudo of yellowtail wrapped into bundles with apples and limoncello gelée has a more welcome role than that of Sofia Coppola in that other Part Three. \$\$

234 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-8222; www.cucinaalessa.com.

READERS' CHOICE: ROMAN CUCINA

BEST BUDDHIST-FRIENDLY FOOD TO GO

Bo De Tinh Tam Chay

The epitome of hole-in-the-wall dining, Bo De Tinh Tam Chay is little more than a warming station and an open-seating area in a hidden Vietnamese shopping plaza. If you're all about the ambiance, chances are you'll walk out of this place just as quickly as you walked in, but the superficial shall never attain enlightenment! Yeah, the place could use a little sprucing up, but it accomplishes the task of providing a space for people to brush up on their Eastern religion-free Buddhist literature, paraphernalia and cassette tapes containing hours of meditative chants-while they dine on crueltyfree cuisine (mind you, Buddhist vegetarian diets allow dairy, but not eggs). The crispy-fried pho and egg-noodle soup with mock duck are scrumptious enough to win over even the most fervent animal eaters. You can get just about anything on the menu for \$7 or less, and the service is efficient and friendly, so you don't even have to bother with sticking around if slumming it just ain't your thang. \$\$ 15352 Beach Blvd., Westminster, (714) 891-4455.

BEST BOILING CRAB IMITATOR

The Kickin' Crab

Every entrepreneur wants to cash in on a craze. When it comes to Cajun-Vietnamese, it doesn't get any crazier than the Boiling Crab. It didn't invent the concept; it just made it popular-a two-hour-wait kind of popular. The formula for the food is simple, and thus easy to replicate. Take all manner of sea creatures, but particularly crawfish and shrimp, boil, then let marinate in a bag with melted butter, garlic and Cajun spices. When customers come in to eat this messy feast, tie a plastic lobster bib around their necks and ply them with beer. So far, among the many recent Boiling Crab imitators, only one has come close. The Kickin' Crab is a clone that talks and walks so much like the Boiling Crab it's close to infringement. If there is one difference, it's the one that matters: There is no wait. \$\$

3611 S. Bristol St., Ste. C, Santa Ana, (714) 754-8888; 10522 McFadden Ave., stes. F & G, Garden Grove, (714) 839-3069; www.thekickincrab.com.





BEST SHABU SHABU/ HOT POT RESTAURANT

The Red Pat

Last year, we tongue-in-cheekily dubbed the restaurant that preceded the Red Pot as "The Best Restaurant That Will Close Soon." Despite our attempt at a reverse-jinx, Four Seasons Hot Pot still shuttered. But as we mourn its loss, we celebrate the birth of its successor. The Red Pot serves essentially the same food in exactly the same spacious, windowbordered room, but it couldn't be more different. Instead of the nearly deaf owner, there are attentive, youthful faces who are as fluent in English as they are in customer service—a jarring but not unwelcome thing for those used to being ignored in Little Saigon. The pricing structure has also changed for the better. The old à la carte system has been jettisoned in favor of a \$19.99 all-you-can-eat model. This, above all, has freed the itinerant explorer to discover things to swish beyond just chicken, beef and lamb. Porkblood cubes, tripe, intestines, even tendon, can now be ordered wallet-risk-free. If you'll allow it, we'll now make another prediction: The Red Pot shall be "The Restaurant That Will Last Awhile." \$\$ 12119 Brookhurst St., Garden Grove, (714) 636-7168.

BEST INDIAN RESTAURANT

Namastey India

The best Indian restaurant in Orange County isn't even a restaurant; it's a grocery store with a vegetarian steam table in the back. The table, which might give anyone pause, is an array of the known (saag paneer, chana masala) and the unknown (bitter melon, curried jackfruit, soy "fish" curry). Those who can't bring themselves to order from trays should try the made-to-order snacks called chaat, assorted crunchy crackers made of chickpea flour and topped with everything from insanely spicy sauces with vegetables to cool vogurt spiked with mint. Nearly everything costs \$5 or less; even the combo is \$6. \$

7232 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, (714) 522-1111.

READERS' CHOICE: NATRAJ'S TANDOORI

BEST MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Taquería Zamora

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There are Mexican restaurants, and then there's this standard, almost a template for all that is right about Mexican cuisine in the U.S.: grimy floors; televisions tuned to some soccer match—any soccer match—somewhere in the world; jukebox blasting regional music when there aren't tejanawearing men going from table to table, ready to trill and strum accordions and guitars for requests; and the daily ritual of men selling DVDs and CDs. The platters speak the culinary lingua franca of Mexicans in el norte—tacos, enchiladas, birria, menudo and chilaquiles on a plate as large as an oil pan. Make like everyone else and

enjoy the complimentary side of refried beans topped with salty cotija cheese. And make sure to take some panocha on the way out—don't snicker, they're delectable gorditas made with brown sugar. \$ 3121 S. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 557-0907; www.taqueriazamora.net.

READERS' CHOICE: AVILA'S EL

BEST CHINESE RESTRURANT

Tri Village

Get the Peking duck. It takes two hours' advance notice and a \$30 investment, but in those two hours, an ordinary water fowl is transformed into candy. Roasted to a gleaming mahogany finish, the lacquered bird is presented for inspection table-side before it is carved by servers more attentive than any you'd meet in the San Gabriel Valley. Watch and drool as the brittle, spun-sugar shards of skin are carefully removed, each precious crisped strip portioned onto round after round of pliant, crepe-like tortillas, then wrapped with swipes of sauce, meat and curls of shaved scallion to make duck tacos as slender as cigars. What remains of the bony carcass is whisked to the kitchen and simmered to create a murky, soulfeeding soup with clear noodles. \$\$ 14121 Jeffrey Rd., Irvine, (949) 857-8833. READERS' CHOICE: P.F. CHANG'S CHINA BISTRO

BEST PERUVIAN RESTAURANT

Aji Limon

You've had saltado before, but did you know it's not even an indigenous Peruvian dish? A bicultural offspring of Andean ingredients married with Chinese stir-fry technique, saltado is just one of many dishes of comida chifa, the kind of culinary melding that always occurs when the Chinese diaspora moves in. But until Aji Limon debuted, no OC Peruvian restaurant had embraced the entire repertoire of Sino-Andean dishes in such a way. A furious whoosh of flames fuels woks in a see-through kitchen that produces plates of fried rice called chaufa, the chow mein cousin tallarin tay pa especial, and a sweet-and-sour-like pollo ti pa kai that gives Panda Express' orange chicken a run for its money. \$\$ 7035 Lincoln Ave., Buena Park,

(714) 229-1500; ajilimon.com.

BEST TRIWRNESE COMFORT DISHES

H8J

A&J is like a pair of old sneakers. There are newer, shinier ones out there, but something keeps drawing us back to what we know and love. In the case of this tiny, always-busy, cash-only Irvine deli, it's the broad yet solid roster of traditional Taiwanese dishes at fast-food prices: juicy, pan-fried beef buns, scallion pancakes, crispy pork chops, pungent porridge, wontons drowning in red chili oil. The apex of comfort food is the hearty niu ro mien (beef noodle



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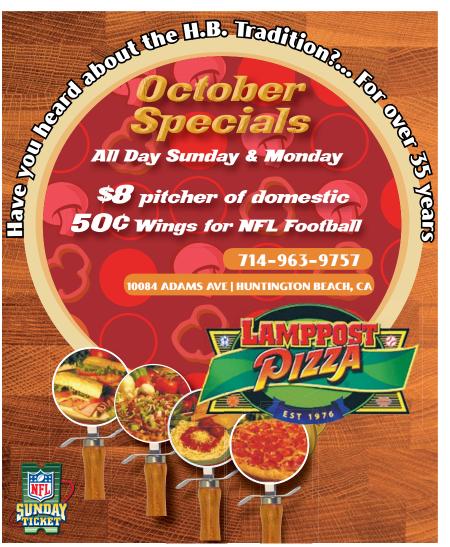
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soup), pho's rebellious cousin. The dark, shimmery brew bobs with slightly chewy homemade egg noodles; chunks of soft, flavorful beef; and a hearty serving of greens. The best part? Here, you can noisily slurp away without judgment. \$ 14805 Jeffrey Rd., Ste. D, Irvine, (949) 786-3585.

BEST CRACK AND CHEESE

The Alley

The baked mac and cheese at the Alleythe Newport Beach Rat Pack hangout at the Pacific Coast Highway-Superior Avenue entrance to the Peninsula—is one of those appetizers you think about weeks, months and years after you've consumed it. Perfectly prepared noodles swim in a shallow bowl with gooey Gruyère cheese, firm bacon bits and flavor-packed crimini mushrooms. The portion is deceptively small-and evenmore-deceptively rich. Order it to share before the entrées arrive, and you'll still have some left over for lunch the next day. It's also not bad as a sponge for what might ail you after overindulging at the 25-year-old late-night spot famous for the "Best Pour By the Shore." **\$\$\$** 4501 W. Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (949) 646-9126; thealleynewportbeach.com.

BEST BISCUITS

Mama's On 39

This new Surf City restaurant started by Pete Truxaw, co-founder of Salt Creek Grille of Dana Point, and his partner Ryan Tombrello has been hammered by food critics, amateur and professional. But there's no denying the Southerncomfort-food-themed joint has at least one culinary winner going for it: the warm, homemade bacon biscuits served all day. Craggy on top like drop biscuits, they gently break apart in the middle like the doughy and delightful Pillsbury variety. Flecked throughout the dough like buried treasure are chunks of smoky bacon, proving yet again that everything is better with that section of hog rolled into your consumable vessel. Mama's On 39's biscuits can be dunked in an accompanying bowl of honey butter, smothered in white gravy or stuffed with other breakfast ingredients for a slider. But just tearing off unadorned slabs and throwing them in your mouth is enough to put a smile on the face of even the harshest critic. \$\$

21022 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach, (714) 374-1166; mamason39.com.

BEST COW AT A FISH JOINT

Billy's At the Beach

The ownership changed not too long ago, and with it the menu, but this oceanfront dining spot in Newport Beach still specializes in great seafood. You can't go wrong if fresh opakapaka is among the day's catches. The macadamia-nutcrusted salmon and mahi mahi are also winners. Then there's the spicy kick delivered by Cajun-spiced yellowfin tuna. But most surprising of all is Billy's take on the lumbering tuna of the dry land (a.k.a. cows). Whether it's the filet mignon, New York strip or bone-in rib-eye, you'll saw off a bite grilled to your specifications, chew it up, and then look around to confirm you did not mistakenly wander into the nouveau riche's best steakhouse. There are two ways to enjoy the best of both Billy's worlds: Order the surf-andturf combo that has a hand-cut, grilled petit filet served with jumbo shrimp grilled in the shell, or start your fish dinner with the Cho Cho appetizer that has beef tenderloin marinated in teriyaki sauce and grilled on skewers. Like their entrée cousins, the beef on skewers is incredibly tender and tasty. \$\$\$\$ 2751 W. Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (949) 722-1100.

BEST POKE

Roual Hawaiian

A staple in Hawaii, poke (pronounced poh-keh) is a refreshing appetizer or side dish typically made with raw fish, limu (algae), inamona (roasted, crushed candlenut) and sea salt. Here on the mainland, it is often reimagined but seldom perfected. Royal Hawaiian gets it right. At the tikitastic Laguna Beach landmark, the dish shines in its simplicity. Chef James Harris takes vibrant ahi tuna; dices it into tiny cubes; tosses it with soy sauce, chile pepper, sesame oil, lime and a bit of ginger; and serves it with crisp, airy wontons. The blend is addicting, though it is the freshness of the fish that reigns. Close your eyes, take a swig of the restaurant's famously potent rum drink, the Lapu Lapu, and you'll feel as though you're on an island vacation. Well, almost. \$\$ 331 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8001; www.royalhawaiianlaguna.net.

BEST STERMED BUNS

Myung In Dumplings

In one hand, a man holds the dough, flattened to a disc. With the other, he spreads the filling of minced cabbage, meat and noodles. Coaxed by his palm, the dough begins to creep up the sides of the mound. His fingers, as nimble as those of a sleight-of-hand artist, seal the top in a series of perfect crimps and pleats. He leaves a tiny hole at the summit to vent. The C-cup-sized wang mandoo is then steamed in a refrigerator-like contraption, magically puffing up to D-cup. The result is moist but not damp, with a lightness and airiness of a fluffed down pillow, as perfect a texture as you'll ever find in a steamed bun-proof that when it comes to bread, whether oven-baked or steamed, freshness makes all the difference. \$ 8911 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove,

ST DESSER SOMEONE É ĪS PAYING

The Madison Restaurant The jumbo-lump, blue crabmeat crab cakes with citrus butter sauce. The warm baby-spinach salad with apple-cider

(714) 638-4009; www.myungindumplings.com.





balsamic vinaigrette. The "Fred Astaire" beef Wellington with filet mignon, foie gras and mushroom duxelle wrapped in puff pastry with a shower of Pinot Noir sauce. Yep, if someone else is paying at this hoity-toity restaurant that appears to have been created by The Sting's set designer, these dishes are hard to forget. But even more memorable, if you call ahead and order it for your meal-ender at the restaurant located in an old bank vault in downtown Long Beach, is the Madison Grand Chocolate Piano. It's not a personal performance from an ivorytickler, but rather the elaborate chocolate centerpiece the chef makes for special occasions. It's so beautiful you'll hesitate before tearing into the sweet, black-andwhite delight. But it's not like you'll be coming back soon, unless you find someone else to pay for it, so dig in; sample the other cakes, pastries and fruit on the platter; and clink your Millionaire Martini (or the more expensive Billionaire) glass to a classy capper to a classy night in a classy joint. \$\$\$\$

102 Pine Ave., Long Beach, (562) 628-8866; themadisonrestaurant.com.

BEST OFF-MENU ENTRÉE

Nick's Pieza Ristorante Italiano Before the shopping center at Harbor Boulevard and Wilson Street in Costa Mesa was redone years ago, Nick's was actually behind the businesses facing Harbor, in the kind of spot where you had to know where it was to find it. Fortunately, bustling Nick's is now in a high-profile locale between Harbor and the TJ Maxx. But that's not all that has changed at Nick's 2.0: One of the best dinner entrées, Della Casa, is no longer on the menu. You can still order it, and you won't even have to explain what it is to the veteran servers. Peas, mushrooms, artichoke hearts and penne rigate pasta are perfectly cooked and tossed in an ungodly creamy tomato sauce that is the perfect combination of sweet and tangy. As you're gnawing away, thinking life does not get any better than this, prove otherwise by grabbing a square of Nick's addictive garlic bread and dip it into the sauce. And the Della Casa portion is so big you can split it with your tablemate and still have leftovers. But be forewarned: It'll just remind you that you need to schedule another visit to that crazy shopping center. \$\$\$

2300 Harbor Blvd., Ste. K, Costa Mesa, (949) 722-7566; nickspizzapasta.com.

BEST THCO

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Alebrije's Grill

Last year, we named the Alebrije's truck's taco acorazado the best dish in Orange County, and it could top Best Of lists for decades to come, not just because of its story—a regional speciality of Cuernavaca, whose residents have a stranglehold on Orange County's *lonchera* industry, but concocted here by Albert Hernandez, a native of Guanajuato who helped fight for taco-truck rights years ago—but because

of its architectural splendor. Behold, a handmade corn tortilla as long and wide as a brick; covered in a bed of rice, grilled cactus, caramelized onions, pickled jalapeños; and crowned by a crunchy, glistening mass of beef milanesa. You don't eat this taco so much as deconstruct it, until you can finally fold the tortilla in half—and then, the full pleasures of this rarest, finest of Mexican *antojitos* in Orange County begin. \$

Corner of Main and Cubbon, Santa Ana, (714) 655-3253.

READERS' CHOICE: CHRONIC TACOS

BEST PHO

Pho Thanh Lich

If you can get past the year-round display of Christmas lights strung outside and the front of the house being as faded as the acid-washed denim your parents wore in high school, then you'll discover the reason this stalwart beat all comers in the Weekly's 2011 Final Pho tournament. Our Vietnamese-noodle experts named this the best bowl in our Little Saigon-which pretty much makes it the best pho in the U.S. The watchword here is consistency: Each bowl that leaves the kitchen has great soup, with beef perfectly cooked until tender and silken strands of rice noodles cooked just right, without any pasty clumping you'd see in lesser shops. But you don't eat beef? Then try the equally rock-solid chicken version. Any Jewish grandmother would proudly claim the schmaltz-slicked, golden stock as her own. How about roasted-duck noodle soup? On Saturdays and Sundays, Thanh Lich makes a delicious bowl of bun, its noodles cut into short lengths, and a broth flavored with young, tender marinated bamboo shoots. The \$6.50 "small" bowl of pho tai dac biet, fully loaded with all the cuts of beef, including tendon, tripe and filet mignon, becomes an even better happyhour value on weekdays from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., when a slightly less meatfilled bowl (no filet mignon) sells for an insane \$2.99! \$

14500 Brookhurst St., Westminster, (714) 531-5789.

READERS' CHOICE: PHO 99 VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT

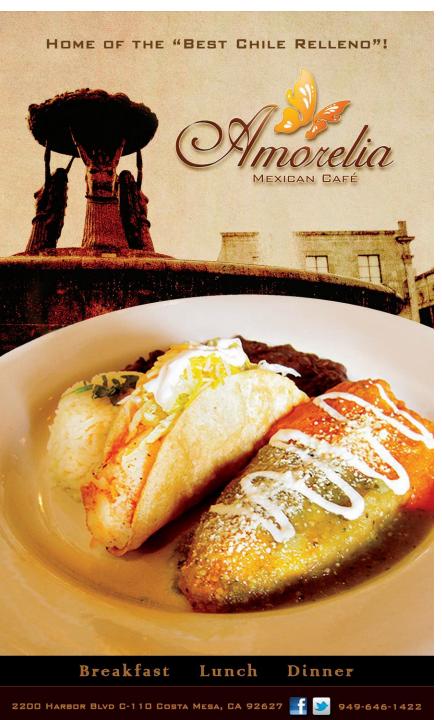
BEST FISH AND CHIPS

Muldoon's Irish Pub

You can eat fish and chips at Muldoon's the way they need to be eaten: chased by a creamy-headed glass of Guinness. The pairing of fried cod and stout is as natural as cheese and wine. You have three venues within Muldoon's from which to choose your poison: as a proper meal at the restaurant itself: as a measly halfportion during happy hour; or, best of all, as an all-you-can-eat, fish-and-chip feast on Wednesday nights. Muldoon's may be the only pub in OC that has enough confidence in its fish and chips to do it. It's already well-regarded for its gnarled, brown-battered knobs of cod whose crunchy cocoons may involve some sort of beer. And if there's something better

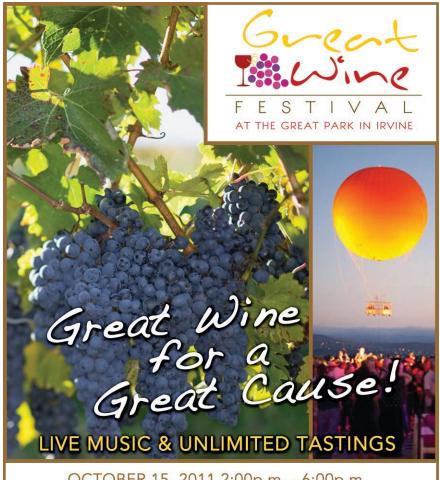












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FOODSTUFFS

BY EDWIN GOEI

PHOTO BY JOHN GILHOOLEY

dee nguyen



sk former Ritz-Carlton chef and Break of Dawn owner Dee Nguyen what he considers the best meal he's ever had, and he'll tell you it was a bowl of rice he ate with sea salt in 1984. It was the first bite of food given to the then-10-year-old refugee when his boat arrived in Hong Kong after a long, treacherous journey from Vietnam. And in more ways than one, it was the meal that would mark the beginning of the rest of his life. What the young Nguyen didn't realize was that on the same boat, eating the same meal, was a girl named Linh.

They married in 2000, after falling in love in college. Nguyen majored in biology at UC Riverside, with the hopes of someday becoming a dentist. But after realizing his dentist relatives weren't exactly the happiest of people, he studied cooking at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco while his sweetheart was in pharmacy school at UC San Francisco.

Today, Nguyen spends his mornings at Break of Dawn (24351 Avenida de la Carlota, Ste. N-6, Laguna Hills, 949-587-9418; breakofdawnrestaurant.com) and his evenings with Linh and their young son, Berlin. He opened the restaurant in 2006 so he could do exactly this. Before Break of Dawn, Nguyen held a prestigious position as the Ritz-Carlton's executive sous chef, but in 2003, he began to rethink his priorities. That year, while Berlin was undergoing surgery to repair a serious birth defect, his breathing tube was blocked, leaving him without oxygen for 10 minutes. The incident left the boy comatose for a month and permanently handicapped when he awoke. Berlin now requires constant care. This event was the impetus for Break of Dawn; Nguyen's restaurant closes by 2 p.m. so he can spend more time with his family.

Break of Dawn's first few months were rough, Nguyen says. Being close to Leisure World, his first customers didn't exactly know what to make of his Merlot poached eggs, beef tongue stew, and crème brûlée French toast with Mexican chocolate. This wasn't the Rooty Tooty Fresh 'N Fruity breakfasts they were used to. Many looked at the menu and walked out. But then came the reviews. Nguyen credits Break of Dawn's turn-around and his now-established food cred to OC's food bloggers, who rightly lauded the food as revolutionary—food that is about the furthest one can get from a bowl of rice and salt.

• Little Saigon. "It's my home base. You can get everything you want. I'm there about two times a week for cheap and delicious Vietnamese food, supplies, and to hear the voice of the Vietnamese people."

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his high scores

- Eva's Caribbean Kitchen. "You always feel welcome there. They have great drinks such as the Brown Suga and Rum Punch. And it's not on the menu, but there's also a key-lime-cheesecake martini that we like. The staff are generous with their pours." 31732 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 499-6311; www.evascaribbeankitchen.com.
- Young restaurateurs. "It's a good example of how much things have changed in OC. I like the kind of food the Crosby and Lola Gaspar serve. It's no-nonsense, not froufrou or molecular. It's real men's food." The Crosby, 400 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 543-3543; thisisthecrosby.com. Lola Gaspar, 211 W. Second St., Santa Ana, (714) 972-1172; lolagaspar.com.
- Farmers' markets. "Since I'm usually at the restaurant on Saturday and Sundays, I can't often go to the bigger farmers' markets, but there's one that happens on Fridays here at the Laguna Hills Mall that I use for supplying Break of Dawn. I can just walk over there!" Laguna Hills Mall Parking Lot, Interstate 5 and El Toro Road, Laguna Hills.
- John Wayne Airport. "It's there when we want to fly out of OC. Once in a while, we need to take a step away from Break of Dawn and go to

San Francisco. We don't get to go any farther."

- Old-school chefs. "I really appreciate old-school chefs, such as Yvon Goetz at the Winery, who understand the basic principles of cooking: salt, pepper and acid." The Winery, 2647 Park Ave., Tustin, (714) 258-7600; www.thewineryrestaurant.net.
- Classic car show at Fuddruckers. "I love American cars! My friends call me a Vietnamese redneck." The free car show happens Tuesday nights, generally from 5 to 8 p.m. 23621 El Toro Rd., Lake Forest, (949) 830-7210; www.fuddruckers.com.
- The Beach. "I used to despise the beach. But now, we go to Salt Creek Beach a lot." Salt Creek Beach, 33333 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point, (949) 923-2283.
- Movies and sushi at the Irvine Spectrum. "Since Berlin is physically handicapped, I appreciate that the movie theater there is wheelchair-accessible. He also loves sushi. The sushi there is decent and Berlin-friendly." 71 Fortune Dr., Irvine, (949) 753-5180.
- Food truck meet-up at Lake Forest Lanes. "With so many food trucks out there, we like to go to Lake Forest Lanes on Tuesday nights. I appreciate chef Joe Youkhan's Tasting Spoon." 22771 Centre Dr., Lake Forest, (949) 770-0055.
- Favorite video game: "I've been playing Mario Kart Wii a lot with Berlin. Sometimes you forget that Wii is a video-game system."

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for fried fish than Guinness, it's unlimited portions of it for the remorseless eating machines in all of us. \$\$ 202 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 640-4110; www.muldoonspub.com.

BEST HAMBURGER

G Burder

From the Charlie Palmers to the drivethrus, the humble burger has been both priced up into the stratosphere and practically given away on dollar menus. But at George Makri's La Habra burger stand, there is a middle ground. Here, the often-divergent paths of price and innovation cross. In his G Burger, a rustic hand-formed patty is only the beginning. You don't tell the server what you want on the sandwich; you tell him what you don't want. Say nothing, and you'll receive a towering pile-up of everything on the toppings list: greens, tomatoes, onions, cheese, teriyaki-glazed onions, Portobello mushrooms, slaw, grilled pineapple, a fried jumbo egg, pastrami, avocados, chili and, of course, bacon. It's all included in the \$12 price tag, a low toll for a burger of this magnitude. A steak knife plunged through the top like Excalibur adds stability. Draw out the knife, and you accept the Adam Richman-esque challenge of finishing it. It's best chased with an equally loaded-to-the-nines side dish Makri calls G fries, his homage to In-N-Out's Animal Fries, but made with way better fried potatoes. \$\$

421 E. La Habra Blvd., La Habra, (562) 245-7208; www.gburger.com. READERS' CHOICE: IN-N-OUT

BEST \$4 TACO

Matador Cantina

Downtown Fullerton received an instant upgrade two years ago, when the execrable Rockin' Taco Cantina-and its insufferable dueling piano players—was replaced by the classy Matador Cantina. This upscale Mexican restaurant doesn't pay its rent with the Matador taco; that's the job of the bar and its expansive dinner menu. But if you're there for lunch-and aren't on some crazy carb-free diet-you can't go wrong with this tasty concoction. Two soft tortillas embrace a hard shell filled with a generous heaping of carne asada, carnitas or chicken. But the toppings are what make it really work: cotija cheese, guacamole and the Matador's always-tasty pico de gallo. Add some complimentary chips, and you've got a full meal for less than a Dos Equis. \$\$\$ 111 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 871-8226; www.thematador.com.

BEST DESSERT

Cafe Hiro

Hiro Ohiwa isn't a pastry chef by trade, but it would be hard to find a better dessert than his croissant bread pudding. When he retired it, customers demanded its return, so it came back, hopefully for good. Enjoy this warm, eggy masterpiece while you can, sopping it up with an ocean of bitter caramel sauce that has the burned imprimatur of coffee. Then

order the flaky banana mille-feuille or a panna cotta decorated with berries in a martini glass, a milky confection wiggling somewhere at the halfway mark between pudding and gelatin. The most intriguing dessert here is the green-tea blanc manger; its soft custard and azuki bean hide under a swampy/sludge-looking layer of matcha that instills fear in mortals who know not of its bitter wonders or that Ohiwa is a master of not only the sweet, but also the savory. \$\$

10509 Valley View St., Cypress, (714) 527-6090: www.cafehiro.com. READERS' CHOICE: CHOCOLATE SOUFFLÉ AT ROY'S

BEST CUPCAKE

Oh for Sweet's Sake

The cupcake craze is petering out, but the Elvis cupcake from the Oh for Sweet's Sake truck may be the epitome of everything that's good about the reinvented classroom treat. A banana cupcake is smeared with a thin layer of peanut butter, then topped with chocolate icing and sprinked with bacon. Salty, sweet, savory and a little meaty; the only thing missing is a dusting of chili powder for some heat. The Elvis cupcake is special and not available all the time, which just makes the serendipity of finding it all the more worthwhile. If chef/owner Lisa Johnson doesn't have the porcine treat, she offers plenty of other combinations to tempt the senses. \$

ohforsweetssake.com; twitter.com/ohforsweetssake. READERS' CHOICE: CASEY'S CUPCAKES

BEST LETTUCE WRAPS

2iing's Bistro & Bar

Though downtown Fullerton is one of the Southland's prime drinking thoroughfares and features lots of opportunities to raise a glass in chic, finely appointed bars, it's also surrounded by one of Orange County's best horse-riding, hiking and mountain-biking trails: the Fullerton Loop. Though not super-technical, the loop is long and physically taxing. Many outdoor enthusiasts prefer to start and end their weekend ride at the parking lot of the West Justice Center. And at the end of a long hump in the hot sun, but before loading the ol' stump-jumper into the truck (or the rack on top of the Prius, whichever), the weary rider will make the quick mile ride to Ziing's Bistro & Bar. The \$8 lettuce wraps make for a light-yetdelicious denouement to a grueling ride. On the smoking patio in back, you can relax your weary muscles and do some people-watching while enjoying a large bowl of ground chicken that has been cooked via wok and mixed with carrots, onions and small, crispy strips of fried dough. Pile the mix onto a large, springy leaf of lettuce and drizzle a little of the sweet soy glaze over the top. The fried crisps add a delightful crunchy surprise to the supple snap of the lettuce. \$\$ 209 N. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, (714) 526-5777; www.ziings.com.

The 2nd Floor Family would like to THANK each & every one of the 250,000+ guests who have supported 2nd Floor in its 1st 15 months! We would like to THANK the Artists for allowing us to showcase their

AMAZING Art & host their Art Shows!

We would also like to say F#CK YOU to all the critics & naysayers who claim to be Art enthusiasts yet incorrectly associate our art w/ Christian Audigier or call it "kooky" & use childish comparisons that illuminate their ignorance & the fact they can't look past what's on a reality show or what they see as art on a T-Shirt. Our Art has been created by very talented Local Artists & Tattoo Artists that we respect so much that we decided to build an entire Restaurant around their years of dedication & passion for their Original Art! If you disagree... we have the phone #'s to every Artist represented on our walls & Art Shows...



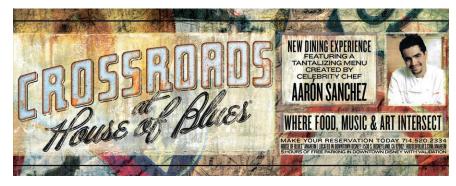
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Ecco Restaurant

Costa Mesa is blessed with not one, not two, but three restaurants that specialize in the thincrusted pizzas of Naples. Think of the pizzaioli at each restaurant as painters with a different vantage point of a model pizza Napoletana. Each rendition is good, but the most perfectly balanced pizza of them all is found at Ecco Restaurant in the Camp. Starting with imported Italian tipo 00 flour fermented slowly over two days, the moderately thin dough cooks in a wood-fired oven burning hot enough to char the bottoms lightly, but not so hot that the rest of the ingredients don't have a chance to bake properly. The crust is crisp instead of floppy, even in the middle. which makes it stand out from the other pizzerias that make authentic vera pizza Napoletana. Individual-sized pizzas average \$15 each. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ 2937 Bristol St., A103, Costa Mesa, (714) 444-3226; www.eccopizza.com. READERS' CHOICE: GINA'S



BEST BURRITO

PIZZA AND PASTARIA

El Toro Bravo

Costa Mesa's own tortilla factory and taquería griddles carne asada alongside long-cooked slivers of caramelized onion. Loaded into a flour tortilla with flavorful refried beans and Mexican rice to make a burrito the size of your forearm, it mates perfectly with the house-made salsa roja or salsa fresca. Want a reduced-carb burrito that won't take two meals to finish? Ask for it "puro carne," or just meat, and it's still a gut-buster of bovine delight at the bargain price of \$5.99. But the point is not in its heft, but in the depth of flavors in the meats: the oniony carne asada, the perfectly rotisseried chicken flavored with achiote-scented adobo seasoning, and the tender, moist style of pork carnitas fried in its own, toasty lard in giant metal cazos in the kitchen. It has the elements that Chipotle's quick-serve burritos lack: rich flavors in every component and a fiercely proud Mexican soul. \$ 745 W. 19th St., Ste. G, Costa Mesa, (949) 631-4464; www.eltorobravo.net.

READERS' CHOICE: CHIPOTLE

BEST HOT DOG

Berkeley Dog

Founded on the idea of cloning the famous Top Dog in Berkeley with the blessing of that hot-dog godhead and permission to buy from the same purveyors, these kings of NorCal hot dogs have opened three locations in our county in less than two years. So we must either have a lot of UC Berkeley alums who long for the dogs of their alma mater, or maybe the rolls and sausages from the

East Bay really do create the ideal balance of bread, meat and toppings. It all starts with a sesame-seeded, crusty, baguettestyle roll that's not too large for the tube steak and maintains a crusty chew even when loaded with heavy, wet ingredients such as chili. The kosher beef hot dogs are griddled, not boiled, and have just the right amount of char. A well-spiced dog not flavorful enough for you? A dozen sausages are on the menu for \$3.85 each, including a classic German bockwurst, a spicy Louisiana hot link and an Italian sausage made by a 60-year-old purveyor in San Francisco. \$\$

215 W. Birch St., Ste. 2, Brea, (714) 257-0988; 4249 Campus Dr., Ste. B148, Irvine, (949) 387-2111; 25522 Marguerite Pkwy., Ste. 101, Mission Viejo, (949) 455-1888; www.berkeleydogs.com.

READERS' CHOICE: JERRY'S WOOD-FIRED DOGS

BEST FRENCH FRIES

MVP's Grill & Patio

Tucked into a residential neighborhood on Fourth Street stands MVP's Grill & Patio, a modest-looking, blue-and-white hut that serves a variety of burgers, sandwiches and salads. Menu items bear the names of famous athletes, including the appropriately named "Shaq," a hefty, succulent tower made from double beef patties, cheese, bacon, avocado, lettuce and tomato. But at MVP, the French fries are way more than a side dish. Spud-lovers will savor the crispy fries that are served regular or with a spicy, savory blend of Cajun seasonings. Grated Cheddar cheese, chili or both can be added atop the mound of freshly fried potatoes for those who want their sides with a little





kick. Whether you get the half order or the full order, a generous portion is provided, which makes it great to share with your friends. Fries ordered to-go are deposited straight into a brown paper bag so piping-hot that the oil seeps through. If there's no grease with the fries, then they aren't cooking them right, right? \$\$ 3701 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 439-0809.

READERS' CHOICE: MEMPHIS CAFÉ

BEST BREWERY

Noble Ale Works

Jerry Kolbly may not have the high profile of some of the other brewers in Orange County—yet—but the man is everywhere, spreading his infectious love for good, hoppy beers. His Noble Ale Works keeps the longest hours of any dedicated tasting room; it's open Wednesday through Sunday, plus Mondays and Tuesdays when the Angels or Ducks are at home. (Look for beer specials for people who come in wearing team gear.) Noble's best-known beer is the Dark Sybian, a black IPA with an appealing citrus flavor and a light head, but brewmaster Tracy Simmonds' favorite is the Alpha Red, which is one of the easiest-drinking beers to come out of Orange County so far. Noble beers are in every high-end beer bar from here to Santa Barbara, and there's no beer event he doesn't want to attend. Currently, only four to six Noble beers are in production at any one time because the brewery itself is not finished. (They are currently brewed in borrowed space at Dale Brothers in Upland.) Once the brewery is finished, production should ramp up quickly. And by the time you read this, the tasting room will have 20 taps, with guest beers filling what they're not brewing. \$

1621 S. Sinclair St., Ste. B, Anaheim, (714) 634-2739; www.noblealeworks.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: NEWPORT BEHCH BREWING CO.

BEST MILKSHAKE

Hans' Homemade Ice Cream This time of year, ice-cream shops everywhere churn out pumpkin-pie ice cream, and some of that will get turned into tempting seasonal milkshakes. The best comes from one of Orange County's older restaurants, Hans' Homemade, open since 1972. The old-time ice-cream parlor feel is the real deal that corporate chains try so hard to copy—from the marble-topped wooden counters, padded stools and tiled floors down to the old-fashioned milkshake machines with the swirly wands. Choose from any of that day's 30 flavors in the display freezer. Scoop after scoop is whirred with cold milk, yet the flavor only seems to intensify. Does the blending release the flavors, which are so potent to begin with? The \$5.25 regular-sized shake is large enough to share. For an extra quarter, add malted milk for an old-fashioned richness. Or for \$5.75, pimp it like Xzibit and get the milkshake float: "Yo, dawg, I heard you like ice cream and milkshakes, so I put a scoop of ice cream on your milkshake." \$\$ 3640 S. Bristol St., Santa Ana, (714) 979-8815.

BEST DATE SHAKE

Gyro Kabob

The date shake is as quintessentially Southern California as surfboards and sunburns, though as times and taste buds change, it's quickly melting off the Orange County landscape. The most authentic one found today is at Gyro Kabob, a family-run Greek spot on the bustling Sunset Beach stretch of PCH. This mind-twistingly rich concoction is a smooth blend of ice, vanilla ice cream and locally grown dates whirred to chewy bits. One forceful sip of the dessert-like wonder reminds us that living here can be oh-so sweet. \$

16873 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Sunset Beach, (562) 592-7771; www.gyrokabob.com.

BEST APPROXIMATION OF A PHILLY STREET PRETZEL

Bread Gallery

A German bäckerei at the beach? Yes, and the pretzels are top-notch: crusty and tangy on the outside, hot and pillowy inside. Take the pretzel home, heat it up in the oven, and devour it with mustard while pretending people are triple-parking in front of you on South Passyunk. Can't get to San Clemente? The pretzels are usually available at local farmers' markets, including the Saturday-morning Laguna Beach and Irvine markets. \$ 1624 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, (949) 366-5849; www.breadgallery.org.

BEST ASIAN PASTRIES

85°C Bakery Café

How to achieve carb nirvana: Stand in the Disneyland-like line outside the glass doors of 85°C Bakery Café in Irvine's Diamond Jamboree. Inhale the buttery aroma of the goodness baking inside. Pass the bakery bouncer, grab a plastic tray and pair of tongs, and go wild. On the well-lit shelves of the airy shop, the first U.S. location of the Taiwanese superchain, an array of straight-from-the-oven wonders awaits—warm, golden tuna Danishes; flaky egg tarts anchored by chewy mochi; just-sweet-enough marble taro bread; blissful squid ink buns made with Vermont sharp Cheddar and garlic paste; hot dogs resting inside spongy sweet rolls; brioche that usually gets snatched up before it's released from the bakers' hands. For lovers of bread and all its sweet and savory accompaniments, the experience can be spiritual. \$

2700 Alton Pkwy., Ste. 123, Irvine, (949) 553-8585; www.85cafe.us.

BEST SPA FOOD

Imperial Health Spa Restaurant
After hours of sweating it out in steam
rooms and saunas, we want to re-tox
with real grub, not itty-bitty cucumbers
and carrot sticks. The restaurant inside
Imperial Health Spa gets that, serving
up remarkably satisfying Korean fare
that would only stink up the lavenderscented air at frillier establishments. In
the small, cafeteria-like setting, you'll find
substantial dishes of kimchi fried rice,



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ddeokbokki (chewy rice cakes drenched in spicy red sauce), naengmyeon (buckwheat noodles in a cold, savory broth), kalguksu (handmade noodle soup) and miyeok guk (the same type of seaweed soup that Korean women slurp for nourishment after giving birth—a tough day at the spa is pretty much the same, right?), as well as with Korean shaved ice to cool you down after being incubated in the dungeonesque red-clay room. Now this is how we say, "Ahhhhh." \$

1885 N. Euclid St., Fullerton, (714) 871-1500; www.theimperialspa.com.

BEST BAKERY

Au Cœur de Paris

What do you get when you marry a French baker to a Vietnamese cook, and then plunk them down just outside the limits of Little Saigon, in an unpretentious space in a surprisingly empty stretch of Edinger? You get crackly, fresh baguettes baked twice a day (without the rice flour so common in Little Saigon). You get pains aux raisins so ethereally light the fruit seems held together by good luck. And you get the best macarons west of Bordeaux. Lest anyone think this is just a French bakery, it sells bánh mì on its baguette (just a few types—this is not a bánh mì shop) and pâté chaud that are as light as pillows, particularly when they first come out of the oven. \$

9441 Edinger Ave., Westminster, (714) 775-8465.

READERS' CHOICE: 85°C BAKERY

Joe's

For those skittish about meats that don't hail from cows or pigs, there's no better way to try them than in sausage form, in which (delicious) parts are hidden in a tube and tucked away in a bun. The menu at Joe's boasts a variety of esoteric brats you won't find at Der Wienerschnizel-wild boar, ostrich, rattlesnake and rabbit, as well as duck and alligator, all spiced to perfection, wedged into a toasted roll, and topped with complementing extras such as caramelized onions, peppers and brown mustard. Though you wouldn't guess with each buttery bite, the sausages are one of the healthiest options at the cozy downtown Fullerton bar and restaurant, also known for its fair-inspired fare—including a deep-fried PB&J. Each sausage has a suggested specialty-beer pairing, making it a meal worth hunting for. \$\$ 124 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 879-2600.

BEST DELI

Moscow Deli

Hidden in a multi-ethnic strip mall on Harbor Boulevard in Costa Mesa, Moscow Deli is a tiny slice of a cuisine underrepresented in Orange County. It's run by a pair of the nicest women ever to emigrate from Mother Russia, and the menu is full of a taste of home—if your last name ends in "ski." They've recently branched out, putting far more emphasis on hot foods and the thick, meal-in-abowl soups for which Russian cuisine is noted. Try the solyanka, a funky, rich, sour soup of meat and pickled vegetables, or a plate of stuffed cabbage and a huge potato pancake. Sandwiches are where Moscow Deli's food service started, and they're still a great bet. Try the Odessa, piled high with thinly sliced sausage, vegetables and eggplant spread on sour rye. Desserts are everywhere, from the rich Russian ice cream in the freezers to the poppyseed pierog under glass to the outstanding syrniki, pancakes made almost entirely of farmers' cheese and raisins, served with the inimitable Russian sour cream. The cases are full of smoked fish, dozens of kinds of kolbasa, and dairy products, and sweet, milky chocolates and cookies line the shelves. \$-\$\$ 3015 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, (714) 546-3354: moscowdeli.com. READERS' CHOICE: JERRY'S FRMOUS DELT

Dang Phuang Tafu

This alternative-protein paradise lurks on a tiny substreet, less than a holler away from Little Saigon's Asian Garden Mall. Its obscured location just off the beaten path of Westminster's bustling Bolsa Avenue draws in a predominantly Vietnamese clientele, but the goods it sells are too tasty to keep within the community. Family-owned and -operated, this barebones specialty shop has been cranking out fresh-from-the-press soy products for more than 13 years. Tofu is prepared daily and served steaming-hot in large bricks or sold by the piece in a slew of delectable varieties. Notable flavors include lemongrass, wood ear mushroom, chive and a delicately textured silken pudding served with a sweet coconut-ginger sauce. Two bucks can get you a half-gallon of soy milk (sweetened or not) that is so fresh you won't be able to handle the heat with your bare hands. If you want to get complex, the crispy faux fish and mock ham make for excellent replacements in any recipe. These items are also free of preservatives and dirt-cheap compared to anything you can find at Mother's Market. So, fear not the chaos that is Little Saigon and venture forth to enjoy the soy. \$ 15022 Moran St., Westminster, (714) 894-7002.

BEST POTATO CHIPS

Rustu's Chips

Leave it to this Huntington Beach-based company to make a hell of a classy and crunchy potato chip. Any old frying oil will do, right? Wrong! Vegetable oil? Yeah, right. Olive oil? Nope. Rusty's is all about safflower oil. And what about the salt? Sun-dried, evaporated sea salt from the French Mediterranean. Class-ay! Now, on to the crunch factor of Rusty's chips: very high. You have to chomp each crunchy sucker at least 10 times before you'll feel comfortable swallowing it.





You'll notice, too, that they aren't the off-whitish color of most potato chips. Unlike most places, Rusty's doesn't blanch or wash the potato slices before frying them. These chips are the prototype of handmade: Employees slice each potato and fill each bag by hand. The chip kitchen is located in an industrial park tucked behind another industrial park in Huntington Beach, and true to form, the office space is rather homey: lots of posters and newspaper articles tacked onto the walls and a sprawling combination of mail and clutter lines the floor. Founder Rusty Vasterling is an H.B. native, father of twin boys and the onetime partial owner of a sports bar in Costa Mesa. He got the idea for the company after eating some especially delicious chips on a trip to Maui. Rusty's Chips opened in 1985, but he sold the company five years later, and then reopened it in 2000. Check out photos of Rusty's throng of fans on the website's photo gallery, too. One fanatic named Sandy takes a bag of Rusty's with her everywhere she travels. So far, the chips have traveled to the Taj Mahal and a Canadian glacier. Thanks to its delicious chips and homemade touch, the local company has made a name for itself nationwide and garnered lots of media coverage, even from Newsweek. You can buy the chips at various Southern California markets or off the website, or you could just book a reservation at the Wynn resort in Las Vegas, since each room is stocked with a bag of Rusty's Chips. \$ (800) 387-0767; www.rustyschips.com.

BEST OLD-SCHOOL FOOD TRUCK

Tortas Ahogadas Los Primos Jalisco is the Texas of Mexico. Everything's bigger, better or badder in Jalisco, from its sports teams to its cuisine. The best-known export from the capital of Guadalajara is the torta ahogada, a crusty birote roll stuffed full of carnitas and drowned (ahogada) in sauce. At Tortas Ahogadas Los Primos, a lonchera (emblazoned with the requisite picture of the Chivas, Guadalajara's pro soccer team) parked in a bleak, industrial stretch of Santa Ana's Fifth Street, the bread is deliberately left in the open to stale slightly, so it soaks up the sauce. Ah, that sauce! It comes two ways, depending on your level of chile commitment: A normal torta ahogada comes with a tomato-chile sauce, with a present but somewhat subtle heat; a "torta bien ahogada" comes swamped in a pint of pure chile de árbol sauce, which is about as subtle as a donkey's kick and will leave you begging for a container of iericalla, the flan-like custard that's a traditional accompaniment. \$ Intersection of Fifth and Hawley streets, Santa Ana.

BEST NEW-RGE FOOD TRUCK

Seabirds

Fresh off an appearance on Food Network's The Great Food Truck Race 2.

Costa Mesa's own Seabirds truck now has a national profile. The show benefitted from telegenic truck owner Stephanie Morgan's striking beauty, but you wouldn't know how delicious her inventive all-vegan menu tastes by watching the telly. Where else can you find a tempura-fried avocado taco, or a Jamaican jerk-seasoned jackfruit that you'd swear was pulled pork? With no prior restaurant experience, the selftaught Morgan launched Seabirds in June 2010. She claims she didn't even like to cook until switching to a vegan diet four years ago. She's now on a mission to make vegan food exciting and delicious even for those whose kneejerk aversion to vegetarian food stems from the one time they ate something vile in their college food co-op that believed in the horrid '70s-era Moosewood Cookbook brand of brown-riceand-tempeh vegetarianism. \$\$

www.seabirdstruck.com: twitter.com/SeabirdsTruck. READERS' CHOICE: SEABIRDS

BEST FARMERS' MARKET

Old Towne Orange Farmers' Market

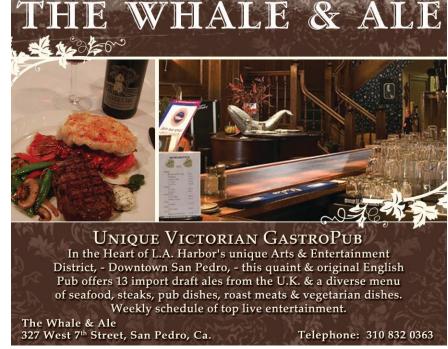
Downtown Orange seems like a natural candidate for a large farmers' marketwalkable, with a university and plenty of upper-middle-class residences nearbybut attempts heretofore have been somewhat anemic. A group of chefs including the Crosby's Aron Habiger and Haven Gastropub's Greg Daniels have banded together to throw their collective culinary weight behind a new Saturday-morning market at the Villa Park Orchards Packinghouse, a couple of blocks off the main drag. The market, though new, is already larger than two-thirds of the farmers' markets in Orange County, with vendors who sell there and nowhere else, such as Grampy Pat's sourdough and the Guerrilla Beekeepers. There's plenty of room to expand, a bike valet and-remarkably-plenty of parking most of the time. As the market grows, expect it to rival the enormous market at UC Irvine, held at the same time.

Corner of Palm Avenue and Cypress Street, Orange; orangehomegrown.org. READERS' CHOICE: IRVINE FARMERS' MARKET HT UC IRVINE

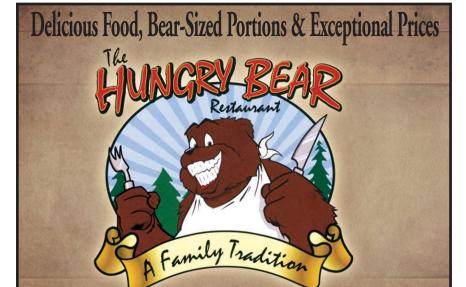
BEST DOUGHNUTS

Lynda Sandwich

Beignets are a very specific style of doughnut: yeasted dough rolled out thin and fried up puffy and crisp. Unlike at a more traditional doughnut shop, the folks at Lynda Sandwich don't make your beignets until you order them. It might take 10 minutes, but they're worth the wait. Lynda Sandwich is a Vietnamese bánh mì shop that pays equal attention to making this specialty from New Orleans. It fries up two shapes of beignet: small triangles that puff up hollow and crisp on each corner, or fingershaped strips that stay chewy. It's up





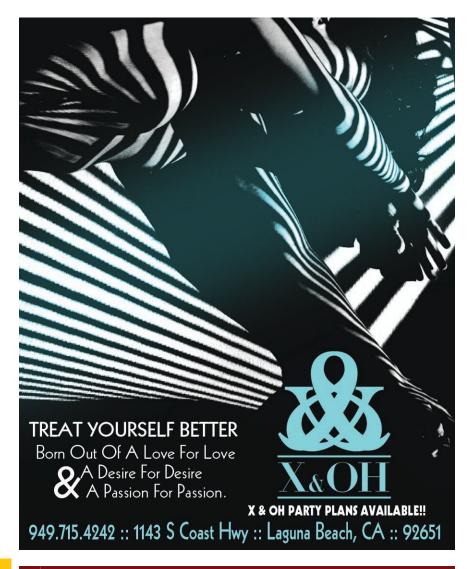


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to you which texture you prefer. Each shape can be flavored in three ways: traditional powdered sugar, honey-and-turbinado sugar, or cinnamon sugar. A \$3.50 order is big enough to share, but you'll want your own order—trust us. Each variation comes with a pool of sweetened condensed milk at the bottom, which you'll mop up with the lusty greed of a rutting animal. \$ 15380 Beach Blvd., Ste. B, Westminster, (714) 898-5400.

BEST BAGELS

Benjies

You'll find bagels hawked around these parts that are syringed full of cinnamon, jalapeño cheese and other flavor bastardizations that convert the doughy vessel into something entirely different, like a bagel-ish or bagel-tini. For God's sake, people, a bagel is yeasted wheat dough, preferably formed into a ring and boiled briefly before being baked. Dense, chewy and crisp, the toasted result may be topped with sprinkled salt, poppy seeds or sesame seeds, but that's it! Save the flavoring for the lox, capers and cream cheese you'll stuff in between slices. Since family-owned Benjies has been serving traditional Jewish food to Orange Countians since 1967, leave it to its staff's well-leavened hands to serve you bagel perfection: fresh, doughy and goldentoasted. Does it also help that the bagel is being served by a waitress who appears to have come with the original booths? Couldn't hurt. \$\$\$

1828 N. Tustin Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 541-6263; benjiesdeli.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: BRUEGGER'S

BEST ICE CREAM

Вгиніё

The frozen custard that Bruxië serves is mere ice cream the way a Ferrari is just a car. It deserves its own category. Unless you're from the Midwest, it will be a soft serve unlike any vou've ever tasted, coaxed into an unequaled velvet texture that's smooth down to its molecular speck. The Bruxië boys source this ambrosia disguised as a frozen treat from an unnamed Wisconsin supplier, who churns it with the right ratios of science, tradition and egg yolks. Take the silky confection in a cup or, better yet, in a waffle cone. As luck would have it, eating this soft serve at Bruxië also means you're at OC's preeminent (okay, only) waffle stand. \$

292 N. Glassell St., Orange, (714) 633-3900; www.bruxie.com.

READERS' CHOICE: RITE AID/ THRIFTY'S ICE CREAM

BEST VIETNAMESE DESSERT SHOP

Thach Che Hien Khanh
Che is hard to define to those who haven't
grown up eating it. All che are desserts,
but all desserts are not che. The sweet
snack can most closely be translated to
"pudding," yet it holds no real resemblance to it. Che comes in various flavors

and incarnations, but the general unifying factors are sweetness, being served in a cup and being ridiculously delicious. Although this traditional Vietnamese dessert can be found in just about any food-to-go joint on the Bolsa strip, no place does it better than Thach Che Hien Khanh. Stellar in both the quality and price, the che offered at this little shop is its specialty, available in a wide selection of classic varieties. Among the most popular is the che ba mau (threecolored che), created from green tapioca noodles, red beans and mung bean paste. For something richer, try the che chuoi (banana che), which drenches cooked bananas in sweetened coconut milk and tiny tapioca pearls. A small order comes in a 6-ounce plastic cup and sets you back a mere \$1.75. That's little more than a single scoop at Rite-Aid-and a hell of a lot tastier. \$

9784 Westminster Ave., Garden Grove, (714) 537-5105.

BEST COFFEE

Portola Coffee Lab

Jeff and Christa Duggan started Portola Coffee in a tiny alcove of Irvine's Layer Cake Bakery, roasting beans every Saturday morning, building up a loyal following and selling their coffee wherever they could. They didn't brew any of it themselves, though Layer Cake used their beans exclusively. This past spring, the Duggans opened a futuristic, limegreen-and-bamboo space at the OC Mart Mix in Costa Mesa, from where they sell beans, paraphernalia and brewed coffee. The espresso is quite good, but the reason to go is to get coffee made in a Hario V60 pourover. The water is poured over the grounds, like an individual drip, and the process awakens fruity flavors most people had no idea existed in coffee. The coffee comes free of as much karmic debt as the Duggans can manage: organic beans only, fair-trade when possible, and they have a deep knowledge of the characteristics of the beans they buy. Happily, the coffee comes completely devoid of the pretense that plagues some third-wave coffee shops. You can even adulterate the coffee with sugar and dairy products if you like, though it's worth trying a couple of sips first. You'll find it hard to go back to Starbucks. \$

3313 Hyland Ave., Ste. C, Costa Mesa, (949) 713-7318; www.portolacoffeelab.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: KÉRN COFFEE

BEST COFFEEHOUSE

Coffee Code

When a newly opened coffeehouse in a notoriously dead commercial block is packed with patrons every weekend night, something must be brewing right. Nearly a year into business, Coffee Code rests in the shadow of Knott's Berry Farm just before the intersection of Beach Boulevard and La Palma Avenue. Don't make the mistake, though, of showing up there for a caffeine jolt before heading on your morning commute: The establishment opens at 11

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foodstuffs



a.m. and closes at midnight. Its strong point is its broad menu of drinks that don't hit the wallet too hard. The Eiskaffe is the most popular of its signature creations. Order it, and a server will bring you a scoop of vanilla ice cream in a coffee cup, pouring a potent espresso over it. The sweet-potato latte also beckons the curious. There's a wider array of choices for the noncaffeinated than at most such establishments. The green-apple slush tastes like a syrupy, liquefied Jolly Rancher, perfect for those who don't want to stay up until all hours of the night staring at the ceiling. For the sake of decadence, add a dessert, such as the whip-creamed waffles. As a coffeehouse, Coffee Code wins presentation points for both latte art and ambiance. Korean pop playing from a mounted flat screen sets the mood; a cushy couch is the best seat to secure in the house. If its popularity keeps rising, Coffee Code might think of expanding to the

empty Papa John's building next door, ending the commercial block's reputation as dead weight for good. \$

7855 La Palma Ave., Ste. 6, Buena Park, (714) 736-0037.

READERS' CHOICE: KÉAN COFFEE

BEST TERHOUSE

Freesoulcaffé

Lift the cap off one of the palm-sized glass containers displaying the café's wares and inhale deeply: sharp, fruity cranberry black tea; smoothly bitter, refreshing lemon myrtle green; the nutty, flowery sweetness of orchid oolong; cinnamon, cloves, coconut and lemongrass in the white chai. Served in a French press are a good three or four cups of fresh tea. Since we're not talking Lipton tea bags here, ask for more steaming water once you've gone through those first four, so you can have three or four more. For caffeine junkies who don't care for the jitteriness of a certain coffee chain's latte—or that burnt-java smell that clings to your clothing every time you visit-Freesoulcaffé is a welcome way to start the day in a decidedly cosmopolitan way. Drink some tea, order a green-tea or pumpkin waffle (complete with syrup and vegan butter), pull out your favorite book, and bring some balance to your life. \$\$

191 E. Main St., Ste. 1B, Tustin, (714) 371-0976; www.freesoulcaffe.com.

BEST TOFFEE

The Chocolate Soldier
In a county full of franchise shoppingmall chocolate shops, the Chocolate Soldier stands out as a mom-and-pop shop,
hand-making such treats as caramel-and-



nut turtles and chocolate-covered "honeycomb"—the crisp, hard, caramel foam confection Brits might know as a Cadbury Crunchie bar, but here, it's done infinitely better. Among the specialties offered are the almond toffee-dare we say it's the best anywhere? What makes this toffee great are the dynamically balanced textures and flavors. Most toffees have a candy layer that's cloying, not cooked dark enough to shed the sugar sweetness. Here, the sugar is cooked until it takes on just enough of a bitter, burned-sugar edge to balance the sweetness of the chocolate that enrobes it. Most toffees are too thick, dangerous to bite into without risk of breaking teeth. Here, the candy core is then spread to an ideally thin quarter inch, just enough to offer resistance as you crunch through the confection. Freshly toasted almonds are the third star ingredient, darkly toasted until they exude a strong nutty flavor and aggressive crunch. Small bits of almond stud the toffee core, scenting the candy with an aroma that commercial toffees lack because they don't take the time to roast the nuts just so. The candy is enrobed in either milk or dark chocolate and covered again in large chopped pieces of those freshly toasted almonds. If you time your visit right, you can watch the toffee being made in the kitchen of the tiny Laguna Beach location, or you can pick them up in the equally cramped, original Dana Point Harbor store that has been there since 1988. \$

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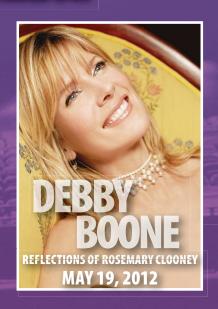
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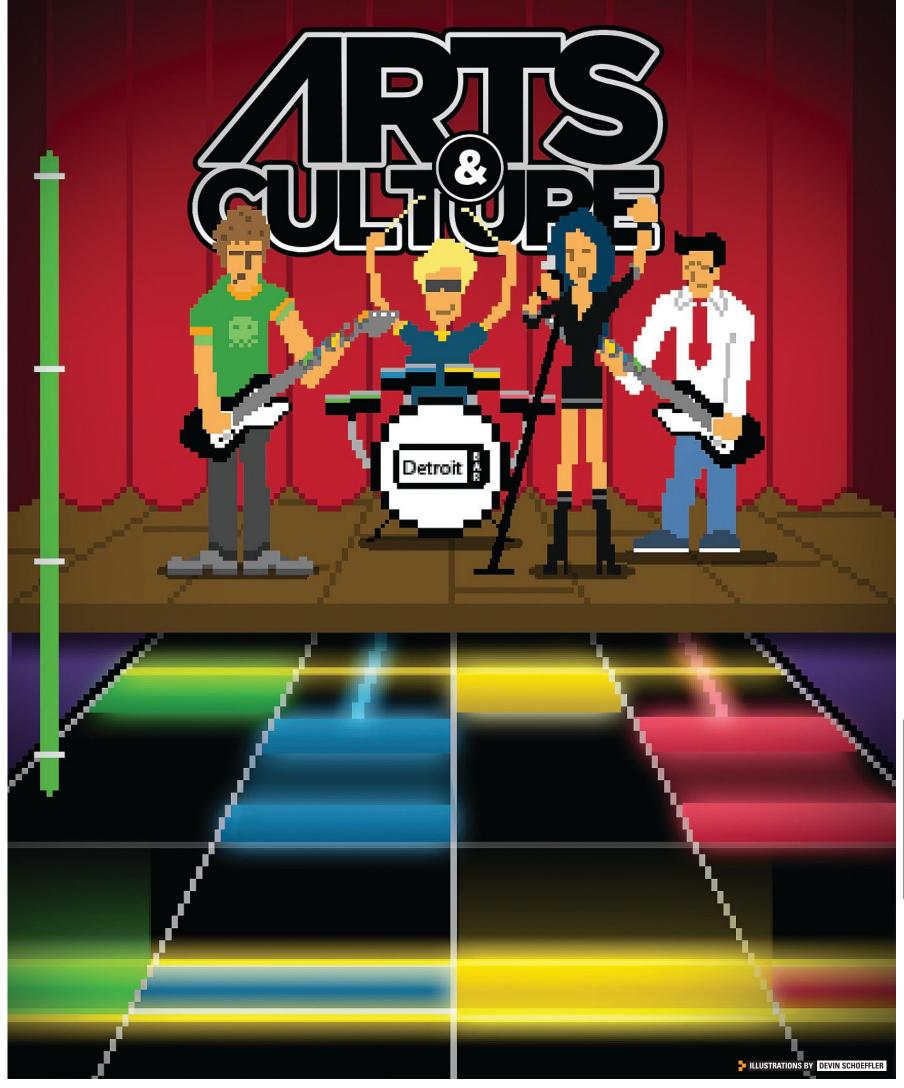






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BEST MUSIC FESTIVAL

Lightning In a Bottle

We heard that electronic experimentalists Do LaB started putting on Lightning In a Bottle because they didn't want to be twiddling their thumbs between Coachella and Burning Man every year. The three-night, four-day festival at Oak Canyon Ranch features DJs, bands, installation art, spiritual talks, yoga and organic food, ensuring a lot of Hula-Hooping, fire-dancing and brain-wobbling from attendees. Bringing a crunchy-granola vibe to antiseptic Orange County is a feat in itself (be prepared for poi spinning and worm-composting classes), but it's so family-friendly that circus performers and freaks on stilts commingle with 5-yearolds racing toy boats on the lake. The sun floats down in dazzling shades of orange, pink and blue over Irvine Lake every day, giving way to the festival's neon lights, four-on-the-floor house beats, and performances from such big-name acts as Booka Shade and the Album Leaf. Transcendent. lightninginabottle.org.

BEST CONCERT TO DRESS UP FOR

The Hootenanny

The Hootenanny serves as not only an annual rockabilly festival, but also a retro fashion show. Though respect must be paid to those talented gentlemen who pull off gravity-defying pompadours, the main attraction is the women. They need not bare all to turn heads, as they parade in lavish updos, vintage-cut dresses and stilettos. No hair is out of place, and their makeup is always flawless despite early-July temperatures that reach toward the triple digits. Some girls look to the likes of Bettie Page, Mae West and Dita Von Teese for inspiration. Others take Old Hollywood glamour or 1950s-housewife style and fuse it with punk and tattoo culture. The result is modern homage to midcentury styles at the largest local rockabilly event.

www.thehootenanny.com.

BEST FLBUM OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Тшо-Шау Mirror, Crystal Antlers Good God, this album rocks. From beginning to end, listening to this 11-song set generates the same apoplectic anxiety and guilty fun you experienced as a 15-year-old sneaking out in the middle of the night to ride on the back of your boyfriend's motorcycle and drink beers in abandoned warehouses. Consider the anthemic swagger of "Jules' Story," or the exultant, heart-stopping breaks of "Always Afraid." Crystal Antler's sophomore release uses the requisite five-man-band instruments to display a sophisticated take on arrythmic beats, shrieking vocals and shredding, rollercoaster-y, feedbacking guitars. And somehow (especially on songs such as

"Fortune Telling"), the overall set conveys a sinister, sexy mood that makes you greedy for song after song after song, until vou've listened to the album 20 times on repeat without noticing.

BEST ROCK BAND

Railroad to Alaska

"Rock band" may be a bit generic a descriptor for this quartet, whose sound righteously struts the battlements of metal, rock and indie. But the "best" part is apt. Winners of the award for Best New Artist at this year's Orange County Music Awards, Railroad to Alaska bring to the stage an invigorating blend of visceral energy and inventive artistry. While banging their heads behind sprawling waves of cascading hair, guitarists Justin Suitor and Jeff Lyman pluck out a nimble interplay of classic-rock-era riffage in the vein of AC/DC mixed with psychedelic, reverb-laden ambiance. While their songs sound great on an iPod, their live shows are the main event: Witness Suitor abandoning the stage to howl amongst the metal monkeys in the pit. Interesting side note: Suitor demonstrates his range of talent and lends his songwriting services to local pop band Honeypie.

www.myspace.com/railroadtoalaska. READERS' CHOICE: THRICE

BEST PUNK BAND

Cosmonauts

The Cosmonauts are punk as fuck, just not in the sped-up-and-spit-out-lyrics-

to-three-chord-guitar-songs way. No, they're punk as fuck in that careless, who-gives-a-shit, it's-all-about-honestto-goodness-rock-&-roll way. Just don't equate that with sloppiness. Their songs have garbled vocals, spun-around choruses and distorted, spacey guitar drones, but they're deliciously hookheavy and incredibly danceable. Watching the band live, prepare to sweat your socks off

www.myspace.com/cosmonautstheband. READERS' CHOICE: SOCIAL DISTORTION

BEST ALTERNATIVE VENUE FOR LIVE SHOWS

Fingerprints

Its street address should be enough to tell you that Fingerprints Records will take you to a higher level of bliss. Not only is the 7,200-square-foot space proving, once and for all, that the physical format isn't dead for music-lovers who snap up collectible vinyl, independent CDs and hard-to-find books, but it's also located in Long Beach's arts district. Situated beside a coffeehouse (Berlin by Portfolio) and within walking distance of a vegan restaurant, art-supply store, sex shop and the beach, it's perfect for whiling away afternoons. Add the high-caliber acts who perform in-stores there-the Foo Fighters, Michael Franti, G Love and Dengue Fever have all played for free-and you're hard-pressed to find a place at which you'd rather spend all your time and money.

420 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 433-4996; www.fingerprintsmusic.com.

BEST RECORD LABEL

TKO Records

Fountain Valley's ultra-punk record label TKO Records (which also has a brickand-mortar shop that carries a varied selection of rare and collectible vinyl)

BEST ROCK BAND Thrice

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REHDERS

BEST PUNK BRND **Social Distortion**

BEST DJ DJ Oldboy

BEST LIVE BAND Young the Giant

BEST HIP-HOP RCT Parallel

BEST INDIE BAND Young the Giant

BEST FIRT MUSEUM Laguna Art Museum

BEST VISUAL ARTIST **Heather Ritts**

BEST INDIE FILM THERTER

Edwards University Town Center

BEST MUSEUM (NON-ART)

Discovery Science Center





actually started in San Francisco in 1997, but it has been saving Orange County's aging crusty punks one record deal at a time since moving here in 2004. The label has produced releases from big names such as the Dropkick Murphys, Swingin' Utters, Cock Sparrer, the Templars and more, and it is still unabashedly punk rock, from its fliers (yes, black and white + jagged writing = punk) to its associates to its events (a book signing for TSOL's Jack Grisham). Punk Rock Christmas at Alex's Bar? Hand me the greenand-red Manic Panic, please!

BEST RECORDING STUDIO

(714) 962-0500; www.tkorecords.com.

ArtiSans Label

ArtiSans Label founder Michael J. Filson developed a distaste for major labels when he was in the band Mojo Filson. After the group's demise, he started Arti-Sans Label in 2008

as an advocate for bands trying to get their starts. With the help of producer Barrett Slagle (Great Glass Elevator) and engineer Kyle Griffin, the trio is the Super Friends of the local recording world. Bands get a ton of options beyond recording, too: ArtiSans helps with distribution, marketing, merch and legal affairs. It even has an Artist Bill of Rights, promising artists they'll receive 100 percent of their album profits, the label will always act in the best interests of a

band's career and someone will always answer their phone calls.

2452 Fender Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-6656; studio.artisanslabel.com.

BEST STONER BAND

Dahga Bloom

At first glance, Dahga Bloom might seem a funny fit in this category. But you forget one very important fact: their name. This Fullerton-based band—vocalist/guitarist Bryan King, keyboardist/guitarist/vocalist Lucas Drake, guitarist/vocalist Matt Mason, bassist/vocalist Manny Lopez, violinist/mandolinist/percussionist/vocalist Zach Nelson and drummer Sean Yakubovsky—used to be called the Living Suns, but they decided to change their name after several members had a similar dream about the African god Dahga emerging from a blooming flower and

commanding them to change the group's name. Um, yeah.

www.myspace.com/dahgabloom.

BEST YOUTUBE STAR

Rebecca Black

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rebeccablackonline.com.

BEST DANCE CREW

Poreotics

The rest of the country only wishes it could tear up a dance floor like Poreotics, six gyrating dudes from Westminster who won the fifth season of *America's Best Dance Crew*, along with bragging rights and \$100,000. Matt Nguyen, Can Nguyen, Charles Nguyen, Lawrence Devera, Justin Valles and Chad Mayate mash popping, choreography and robotics with a clean technique and crisp body isolations humbled by a light-hearted, theatrical presence. And as if snagging the top spot

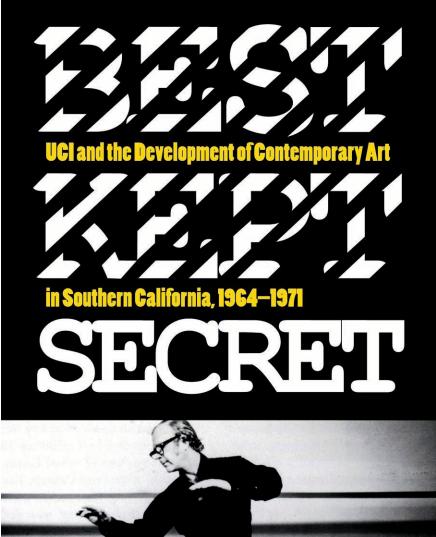


on Randy Jackson's show isn't enough of a seal of approval, the crew also finished first in the U.S. division of the 2009 Hip-Hop Internationals. After the championship catapulted it to stardom, the local group traveled to Australia for its "Tic Toc Tour." If you missed it, you can still see Poreotics in action in music videos for both Bruno Mars and Justin Bieber.

BEST REUNION BAND

Middle Class

Their hair was a little shorter—or more there, rather—than before, and their angst was a bit less angsty, but these Santa Ana natives showed the fans at their November reunion show at the Echoplex that they could still rock. In fact, good luck finding a decent YouTube video of the show because everyone filming





UC Irvine was a hotbed of creativity and experimentation in the 1960s and early '70s, a hub of innovation where exceptional teachers such as Tony DeLap, Robert Irwin, and Vija Celmins taught talented students like Alexis Smith, Chris Burden, and Nancy Buchanan. All but forgotten in the intervening years, this exceptional time and place is now recovered at Laguna Art Museum in Best Kept Secret.

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tom chilton, chris robinson & j. allen brack · · ·



mbrace your inner geek.

It's a motto of all those in the Blizzard Entertainment tribe, and one that Tom Chilton, Chris Robinson and J. Allen Brack take seriously.

At the gamemaker's Irvine home base, a sprawling campus guarded by a bronze statue of a hulking orc riding a wolf, the trio helps to oversee the making of World of Warcraft (WoW), a monster-slashing, treasure-collecting, quest-venturing virtual world inhabited by more than 11 million subscribers across the globe.

Chilton, 38, is *WoW*'s game director or, as he describes, "last defense against bad ideas." Robinson, 32, serves as the art director, making sure every goblin, gnome and gold coin fits the game's visual style. And Brack, 38, works as the production director, coordinating the "many different pieces that go into making [the game] awesome." The core development team of 140 is currently working on new content, including, Brack says, "a huge fight in which players fight a dragon in a way we've never done before. Everyone likes fighting dragons, right?"

Inspiration for the game, Chilton says, comes from all sources: "Books, TV, movies, friends, comic books, deep within ourselves—you name it." It also comes from their Orange County surroundings. Robinson reveals that a backdrop in *WoW's* third expansion, *Cataclysm*, was inspired by the coastal drive in Newport Beach.

For each of the jeans-and-T-shirt-wearing masterminds, the goal is to keep finding new ways to captivate players and transform them into heroes on an epic journey. It's "being able to forget about what's going on in your life and just be in this world with your online friends," Robinson says.

It's a world they themselves don't want to leave. Just after the interview, they started plotting a plan to form a five-man team and conquer the denizens inside a dungeon—something they'll do on their lunch break.

"If we're not geeking out and laughing and having a good time, if we get into a place where it's just business as usual," Robinson says, "then we've lost whatever it is that makes us great."

their high scores

- Old Vine Café. "Probably my favorite restaurant in Orange County," Brack says. "Get the eggplant buratta with pesto. Tasty. And the macaroni and cheese with porcini mushrooms—the best!" 2937 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 545-1411; www.oldvinecafe.com.
- Wineworks for Everyone. "I like the stuffed mushrooms and live music by Colin," Robinson says. 26342 Oso Pkwy., Mission Viejo, (949) 582-0026; www.wineworksforeveryone.com.
- The Coyote Grill. Robinson advises, "Get the fish tacos." 31621 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 499-4033; www.coyotegrill.tv.
- Location, location, location. "My favorite thing about OC is its proximity to the beaches, the mountains and Las Vegas," Chilton says. "It's situated in a great spot."
- **Diversity!** According to Brack, "I really like the ability to choose from a diverse selection of communities. Each place has its own flavor and vibe, so there is always something for everyone, no matter their mood."
- Laguna Beach. "It has a really great feel as a town," Brack says. "I enjoy being able to sit outside, have a glass of wine and just relax. Las Brisas has excellent drinks and the best guacamole in the universe. Mozambique has a great vibe and really diverse menu. And the blue cheese French fries at Nirvana Grille are fantastic—get two orders!" Las Brisas, 361 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-5434; www.lasbrisaslagunabeach.com. Mozambique, 1740 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 715-7777; www.mozambiqueoc.com. Nirvana Grille, 303 Broadway St., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-0027; www.nirvanagrille.com.
- A Quick Jaunt Around the Neighborhood. "There's this outdoor running path in Irvine that goes around UC Irvine and the Blizzard campus," Brack says. "It's a nice, gentle-grade path that extends for more miles than I can run at the moment. Gives me plenty of space to always go farther."
- Salt Creek Beach. "I have a 2-year-old, and I love to bury him in the sand," Robinson says. "We do that for hours." 33333 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Dana Point, (949) 923-2283.
- Go, go, go-karts. "K1 Speed is fun. I love cart racing," Chilton says. 17221 Von Karman Ave., Irvine, (949) 250-0242; www.k1speed.com.
- Modified golfing. "When it's nighttime, nobody goes out, so we play Potato Golf—or POLF," Robinson says. "You drive with potato guns and finish with your other clubs."
- If OC were a video game, which one would it be? "What was that plastic surgery game?" Chilton asks. According to Robinson, the answer should be "The Sims." But Brack thinks, "Hot Shots Golf. Or Leisure Suit Larry."

П

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Image credit: Robert Kinmont: 8 Natural Handstands, 1969/2009; courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York. Photo: Bill Orcutt



in the crowd was moshing so hard the videos are too *Blair Witch Project*-esque. Original band members Jeff Atta, Mike Atta and Mike Patton were onstage with Matt Simon, but the Attas' other brother, Bruce, who now works as a college professor, opted out because he didn't have time. Atta boy! The band still had that Clash-influenced sound and energy that earned them notoriety way back when, and the crowd screamed incessantly through the hit song "Out of Vogue," which they still sing so crazy-fast that it sounds like they're saying "Adam Jones."

BEST FOLK ACT

Nicole Vaughn and Her Lovely Band

Nicole Vaughn has all of the elements that make for a great folk act: introspective lyrics that explore the trials of the heart and societal ills; songs that can be done acoustically, with catchy riffs or upbeat and rock-steady; and, of course, with her petite stature, tousled blond hair and infectious smile, she's just adorable. The recent addition of a backup band and a solid new album have breathed new life into her career; Say It is a totally relatable set of songs that speaks of heartbreak without being shallow or commonplace. In 2010, her songs were prominently featured in the documentary Finding Kind, which screened as part of this year's Newport Beach Film Festival, among others. And she's constantly playing all over Southern California, which is truly a treat for those in the crowd who enjoy her energetic and touching performances. nicolevaughn.com.

BEST DJ

DJ Michelle

Santa Ana's Michelle Reyes doesn't take to the ones and twos to pad her pocketbook nor to gain name recognition. DJ Michelle carefully crafts sets reflective of her city's multiple musical layers, spinning everything from Los Tigres del Norte to Rage Against the Machine, Black Sabbath and Morrissey to Chico Che y La Crisis. She honed her eclecticism while working for more than four years at downtown Santa Ana's Proof bar, even hosting once-amonth Subterraneo nights of quinceañerathemed music until ending her tenure there this year. It's in that deeper underground realm where she loves offering her services and derives the most joy from carving an identity as a community DJ. Whether it's self-organized shows by SolArt, fund-raisers for groups such as Orange County DREAM Team and DeColores, art-exhibit openings for Calacas. events at El Centro Cultural de Mexico or the annual Grrl Fair festival, DJ Michelle keeps the beat of the movement going.

READERS' CHOICE: DJ OLDBOY

BEST UNDERAGE BAND

England Street

Anyone who naysays this pick needs only visit the band's Myspace page and

listen to, say, "Victim By the Prey." From the full, crisp sound of the track's intro music, it's clear these Huntington Beach kids know how to jam. After a long guitar riff, you'll get hit with front woman Alie Dicus' funky, spot-on voice. As she maneuvers her pitch with ease, commands attention and directs the flow of the song, she'll carry you with her; Dicus can make screaming sound almost pretty (think: Paramore front woman Hayley Williams). That's something most adult singers can't seem to figure out. These young'uns-joining Dicus are Ryan Nelson, Jake Briggs, Anthony Haas and Joey Groth-have done something else a lot of aspiring adult bands haven't: played the House of Blues in Anaheim. What's more, they were nominees in the Best Youth Artist category of this year's OC Music Awards. Rock on, stud muffins! www.myspace.com/englandstreet5.

BEST NEW BAND

May McDonough & Co.

We'd call May McDonough's music serendipitous dirty folk. While she's well-versed in the intricacies of deciphering melodies and harmonies in grimy tones (due to the requisite Tom Waits immersion), most of the songs on her whimsical, gypsical debut, Spilt Milk, have been produced out of necessity. After her then-band ditched her hours before a KUCI gig last year, friends came to her rescue by filling in on drums, trumpet, bike spokes for percussion and bike chains for added sonic texture. McDonough-who says, "We only ever use things we specifically need for [our] sound"—is no stranger to lead pipes and stones, but her bluesy voice and guitar playing are things to behold. We can only imagine what kind of orchestral mayhem she'd come up with in a junkyard.

www.maymcdonoughandcompany. com, maymcdonough.tumblr.com, www. facebook.com/McDonoughAndCompany, twitter.com/maymcdonoughco.

BEST LIVE BAND

Free Moral Agents

For Free Moral Agents, more is decidedly more. Ikey Owens (keyboardist for Mars Volta) brought together the collective of Long Beach musicians (the number is ever-morphing, but fixtures include singer Mendee Ichikawa, drummer Ryan Reiff, guitarist Jesse Carzello and bassist Dennis Owens) so he could properly execute the multitude of sounds in his head. The result? A band that produce an incandescent blend of rock, trip-hop, funk, psychedelic and soul music that's perfect for getting stoned to or watching late at night with your jaw hanging open.

www.myspace.com/freemoralagents. READERS' CHOICE: YOUNG THE GIANT

BEST HIP-HOP ACT

CHIEFSONS

Bigryzn and Moshpit were known as ADRENALINE BROTHUZ before Rakaa



of Dilated Peoples suggested they go under the banner CHIEFSONS (their caps, not OURS). Moshpit, a Samoan Santanero, had been known by the name in singular form, but the expansion to the plural added depth and paid homage to the blood brothers' father, an actual chief from Samoa. The underground MCs went on to unleash monstrous standout verses on "Ambassador Slang" off Rakaa's 2010 solo effort, Crown of Thorns, but they have been active on the scene since long before that. After generating local buzz back in the day, Bigryzn, then known as BIG TIME, was recruited in the late '90s to the KILLA-FORNIA ORGANIZATION project that came out of the OC/LA area. Moshpit battled his older brother until the two formally joined forces. CHIEFSONS are husky-voiced rappers (think Xzibit meets Immortal Technique) who skillfully stay in the pocket, never rhyming off-beat. They throw in battle lines with South Pacific-specific references, letting competitors know they're "roastin' MCs/ Like Samoans roast pig!" The brothers who have shared a stage with Rakaa. Ras Kass, Kurupt of the Dogg Pound and Hieroglyphics, among others—are currently working with Federico "C Sik" Lopez on new material, but what they've already recorded and put out shows they are chiefs of the underground. www.myspace.com/chiefsons,

www.reverbnation.com/thechiefsons. RENDERS' CHOICE: PARALLEL

BEST USE OF 3D BY A BAND

Kieu

Seems like you can't go to the movies nowadays without putting on a pair of flimsy, fake Wayfarers. And now one local band have brought 3D glasses to a new venue: an indie-rock concert. Kiev are five dudes-Robert Brinkerhoff (vocals, guitar), Brandon Corn (drums), Derek Poulsen (bass), Alex Wright (keys) and Andy Stavas (keys, saxophone)-who know how to make music and how to mix things up. Growing up in Orange, they wanted to see the county's music culture flourish, and they figured the best way to bring cooler, unique shows to the area was to put them on themselves. Thanks to some family members and friends with copious amounts of 3D equipment, their dream became a reality on May 24 at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, when they opened for Menomena. With the help of two projectors and many, many pairs of 3D glasses provided by the band, the audience experienced a concert of epic proportions. The images, which ranged from pictures of running people to organic, slowly morphing lines, were intentionally synced with the music to create a multilayered effect. Kiev, who won Best Indie Band at the 2011 OC Music Awards, intended for the 3D show to be a one-time thing, but it got such stellar reviews they're already planning

OCWEEKLY.COM

another 3D gig. And all the OC stoners said amen!

www.kievband.com, www.myspace.com/kiev.

BEST POP SENSATION

Matthew Morrison

Hailing from OC is the country's coolest high-school teacher. Or, you know, the guy who plays him. Today's pop tarts know Cypress native Matthew Morrison as Glee's Will Schuester, the vest-wearing leader of the McKinley High School glee club. But the Emmy- and Golden Globenominated actor, dancer and crooner has a résumé that sashays far beyond the FOX musical phenomenon. Pre-TV heartthrob, Morrison was a Broadway heartthrob, starring in productions of Hairspray and The Light In the Piazza (for which he was nominated for a Tony Award). This summer, he released his first solo album. which includes a duet with Elton John, and joined NKOTBSB (New Kids on the Block + Backstreet Boys) on their tour as a special guest. Still, the man stays true to his local roots. A 1997 graduate of Orange County High School of the Arts, Morrison routinely returns to the Santa Ana campus for charity events. Can you say Teacher of the Year?

www.matthewmorrison.com.

BEST BAND IN COSTUME

Death Hymn Number 9

The white face paint, scare tactics and spattering of goat's blood might lead you to believe Death Hymn Number 9 have nothing to live for, but playing up their unearthly gimmick to the hilt works. Their music might be run-of-the-mill thrash/garage rock without the zombiesas-musicians tag, but still, they've earned the right to their own mythology (it involved "pussy ass" Marvin Gaye leaving their asses to die when attacked by zombies in the 1960s) and a specialized term for their genre: "gospel/power/violence." Their latest, Smokestack Frightening, resurrects a medium everyone has been calling dead for years (it's actually undead)it's only on vinyl.

www.myspace.com/deathhymnnumber9.

BEST INDIE BAND

Honeypie

When Honeypie performed at this year's OC Music Awards, they were lumped into the folk category. While we're glad to see them recognized by the OCMA for their über-catchy pop-drenched jams, we don't really see the folk thing-they use electric guitars and skew rock. We're sure, however, some readers will argue the band aren't technically indie, either (semantics, a delightful trifle). What can be said with certainty is that this quintet play songs with lots of heart, featuring a Rilo Kiley earnestness with the epic sonic aura of Arcade Fire. Honeypie focus on simple but infectious melodies and wonderfully insightful lyrics about human relation-



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The Kitchen

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Órla Fallon

(formerly of Celtic Woman)
Oct 29 at 8pm

An Irish favorite, this songbird mesmerizes audiences with her gorgeous musicalty in a beautiful evening of celtic song.

Featuring songs from his latest release *Listening Booth: 1970*, Cohn doesn't merely recreate the sounds of this storied time, he transforms songs from such artists as Cat Stevens, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Van Morrison, Smokey Robinson, Creedence Clearwater Revival into tracks that are warm, soulful, and always full of easy-going charm.





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ships and their inevitable complications, forgoing the indie sound currently in vogue and genuinely exhibiting the independent spirit of rock. Though the band are a group effort, these things come largely courtesy of front woman Trisha Smith, a diminutive Huntington Beach gal capable of baiting listeners with a sweet, youthful voice, then switching to an unexpected howl.

www.myspace.com/honeypiemusic, honeypie.bandcamp.com. READERS' CHOICE: YOUNG THE GIRNT

The Gramble

Remember the Gromble—that pukecolored monster with crazy tufts of hair, yellow teeth and a phallic-looking nose, all four feet donning red stilettos? Yeah, the creepy fellow from the 1990s Nickelodeon cartoon Aaahh!!! Real Monsters. Even though this Laguna Niguel-born band are named after that creature, they certainly don't sound as scary as he did. Started in 2009 as a project among four friends, the band have grown to a quintet (Trevin Eck, Steven Lindenfelser, Spencer Askin, Stefan Macarewich and Michael Lee) playing funky, peppy rock reminiscent of the '90s. Sure, they don't have the notoriety of LA-based pop/rock kings Weezer, but they've got a similar sound. The Gromble played a big gig with Honeypie at the House of Blues in June and recently signed a deal with indie record label 37 Records. These guys are on the rise, and that's a good thing. www.reverbnation.com/thegromble.

BEST BAND GIMMICK

Cunt Sparrer

Looking for a gimmick for your indie band? Some musicians choose to assemble players with a glaring lack of musicality. It's what Long Beach band Cunt Sparrer did, and despite not being musical virtuosos, they display delightful ingenuity and palpable charm-and are a joy to watch. Comprising recent art-school grad student Jennie Cotterill, co-vocalist Sara Lyons and drummer Jen Kirk-Carlson, the trio lovingly rock covers of 1970s east London oi! band Cock Sparrer. With ironic abandon, they blithely retool such classics as "Because You're Young," "Bird Trouble" and "Runnin' Riot," using a panoply of quirky instruments from toy glockenspiels and melodicas to wheezy, flea-market keyboards. Fans expecting to see three Mohawk-donning bruisers snarling and sneering at the crowd will be disappointed. In person, as in their performances, Cotterill and Lyons come across as mischievously sweet girls from the neighborhood—though it's not all innocent smiles and sunshine. During an interview last year with the Weekly, Cotterill randomly mused on the soundness of interrupting a lover mid-coitus with frivolous questions. In the end, what

comes across in Cunt Sparrer's performances isn't the tinny sound or the gals' occasionally colliding two-part harmonies, but their unwavering optimism and joy while playing cynical, working-class punk-perhaps the most impressive gimmick of all.

www.cuntsparrer.com.

BEST BAND MERCHANDISE

Kattanmouth Kings

The well-known Placentia stoner band have scores of albums and several films under their belts. But they've also proven to be masters of merchandising beyond CDs, DVDs with live footage of them playing and plain T-shirts. If you're an athletic stoner, their blackand-green basketball jersey is for you. While you're at it, you can buy some wristbands to keep the sweat from dripping down your hand and onto your doobie after you're done dribbling up and down the court. For the classy stoner, Kottonmouth Kings pin can adorn your suit lapel. Their merch has the ladyfolks covered, too; just pick your color of Kottonmouth King panties. There are also socks, patches, charm bracelets, signed posters, bottle openers, etc. All of this from a band that couldn't even get to Korn levels? Genius! www.kottonmouthkings.com.

BEST BAND NAMED AFTER A BEER

Jeramiah Red

Good bands know good beer. Did you know Creedence Clearwater Revival got the "clear water" part of their name from an old TV ad for Olympia beer? And, what about Blue Öyster Cult? Well, their name is almost an anagram for Cully's Stout Beer. Add local quintet Jeramiah Red to the list of awesome beer-named groups. They got their moniker from an Irish-style ale sold at BJ's Restaurantsalthough the beer is spelled Jeremiah with an E. A couple of the band mates used to work at BJ's and developed an affinity for the brewski, often downing one or two after their shifts ended. They introduced it to their buddies, who dug the beer—and the name. Lead vocalist/ guitarist Wes Dickson, guitarist/vocalist Ian Cullen, bassist Tim Miller, drummer Matt Pleskacz and percussionist/ harmonica player Travis Ruiz not only can hold their beer, but they also make badass music. Though the guys grew up in Orange County, they all came from very different backgrounds musically, and that diversity helped them form their funky fusion of rock & roll and blues (think: Black Keys). Dickson's powerful, crisp voice commands attention, but it is Ruiz's immaculately executed harmonica riffs that take the songs from good to damn good. Jeramiah Red played some big venues this year-including the OC Fair-and thev were nominated for the People's Choice





Award and Best Rock Band at the 2011 OC Music Awards. So, beer-band enthusiasts, by all means, continue in your quest to try every beer ever brewed before naming your band, but in the

meantime, head to BJ's, buy the ale and listen to these guys.

www.myspace.com/jeramiahredmusic.

BEST SINGER/ SONGWRITER

Ethan Hulse

Okay, okay, so singer/songwriter Ethan Hulse didn't hide in a cabin in northern Wisconsin to write a break-up album via falsetto in the dead of winter. (Instead, he works at the high-school ministry and leads Sunday worship at the Mission Viejo Mariners Church, while also gigging his way through the OC coffee-shop circuit.) But the songs on his EP I Don't Feel Simple are calm and unpretentious, with a touching, memorable quality to them, drawing you in emotionally the same way Bon Iver's songs do. Hulse says the set of songs is "about finding life to be different than what you expected it to be," and the promising collection makes us eagerly anticipate a full-length, which he says will come out sometime this year. ethanhulse.com.

BEST ART MUSEUM

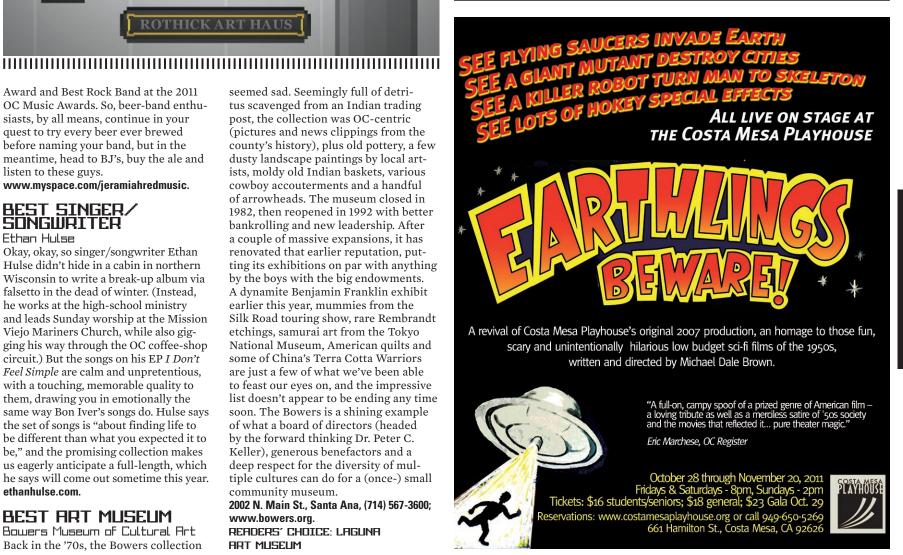
Bowers Museum of Cultural Art Back in the '70s, the Bowers collection seemed sad. Seemingly full of detritus scavenged from an Indian trading post, the collection was OC-centric (pictures and news clippings from the county's history), plus old pottery, a few dusty landscape paintings by local artists, moldy old Indian baskets, various cowboy accouterments and a handful of arrowheads. The museum closed in 1982, then reopened in 1992 with better bankrolling and new leadership. After a couple of massive expansions, it has renovated that earlier reputation, putting its exhibitions on par with anything by the boys with the big endowments. A dynamite Benjamin Franklin exhibit earlier this year, mummies from the Silk Road touring show, rare Rembrandt etchings, samurai art from the Tokyo National Museum, American quilts and some of China's Terra Cotta Warriors are just a few of what we've been able to feast our eyes on, and the impressive list doesn't appear to be ending any time soon. The Bowers is a shining example of what a board of directors (headed by the forward thinking Dr. Peter C. Keller), generous benefactors and a deep respect for the diversity of multiple cultures can do for a (once-) small community museum.

2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3600; www.bowers.org.

READERS' CHOICE: LAGUNA

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BEST ART GALLERY

Rothick Art Haus

A Rothick Art Haus sonnet celebrating the intimate art gallery owned/operated and ingeniously curated by husband-andwife team Nick Rothweiler and Kelly Castillo. Ahem:

Where has all the art gone on Sat. and Sun.?

It has gone to the home of the woman With the turquoise hairdo not in a bun And the guy who looks like he's in a band.

Okay, fuck iambic pentameter.

A Rothick Art Haus poem celebrating the intimate art gallery owned/operated and ingeniously curated by husband-andwife team Nick Rothweiler and Kelly Castillo. Ahem:

I saw the most diverse art by local artists displayed with grace, simple uncensored naked.

hanging from the white walls awaiting a hip, hungry patron with burning taste,

Arts commissioner Kelly running Dr. Sketchy's anti-art school

to fund the space through slow times. Too Allen Ginsberg-y.

A Rothick Art Haus haiku celebrating the intimate art gallery owned/operated and ingeniously curated by husband-andwife team Nick Rothweiler and Kelly Castillo. Ahem:

Nick and Kel soul mates Doing what they love and Doing it so well.

Yoosh. That sucked. And was a syllable off.

A Rothick Art Haus bumper sticker celebrating the intimate art gallery owned/operated and ingeniously curated by husband-and-wife team Nick Rothweiler and Kelly Castillo. Ahem:

"My kick-ass gallery beat up your honor student."

170 S. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 829-8283; www.rothick.com.

BEST VISUAL ARTIST

Glenn Arthur

Take a quick tour of painter Glenn Arthur's Facebook page, and you'll find an album dedicated to lovers of his work who have his images tattooed on their flesh. His hummingbirds, skulls and stitched hearts are the favorites, but there is also a host of pics in which (mostly) women have pictures of his doe-eyed female archetypes engraved onto their skin. Arthur's fans are obsessed, but so is he. An artistic autodidact, Arthur threw off the chains of conservative Christianity and went in the opposite direction with paintings that have a decidedly erotic appeal. A self-described "perfectionist in love with imperfection," Arthur's paintings are anything but imperfect, transcending the limitations of their Patrick Nagel influence. Obsessive in his themes—the aforementioned trio of skulls, steampunked hummingbirds

and hearts, as well as mascara running down cheeks, lesbian overtones, keys and flowers—it's fairly clear the artist must be a little in love with his subjects. And he succeeds in making us, straight or gay, love them, too. The flowing hair, luscious lips and supple skin of the women living on his canvases almost make one wish the artist was Pygmalion. Until that unlikely thing happens, let's go get a tattoo.

www.facebook.com/artist.glennarthurart.
REHDERS' CHOICE: HEHTHER RITTS

BEST ARTIST WHO DESERVES OUR PRAYERS

Emigdio Vasquee

This man is one of the most famous painters to ever emerge from Orange County, a titan of the Chicano arts scene, someone whose murals depicting Orange County life stand everywhere from parks to libraries, city halls to colleges. But Vasquez is no longer here to bask in our rightful adulation; he now lives in Arizona due to health problems, and he probably will never return. Most of his children remain in Orange County, though, fighting neverending battles to save their father's legacy from the ravages of the environment, ignorant city council members and time. May he return and continue painting one day. . . .

www.1artstore.com.

BEST ART SHOW 'Economy Portraits' at the

Huntington Beach Art Center During her stint as artist in residence at the Huntington Beach Art Center, photographer Gina Genis took a portrait of anyone who would pose for her against red, white and blue backdrops. She asked each one, "How has the collapse of the economy affected your life?" The myriad handwritten answers she received were layered onto the respective portraits, then printed and hung about the gallery, until the pictures took over one wall, forming a giant American flag 11 feet high and almost 19 feet long. The ingenuity and topicality of the project are nothing new to anyone who knows Genis or her work. Her compassionate photos in a recent Laguna Art Museum exhibit reflected a conscience sorely disturbed by the degree of people's isolation from one another, while the exhibit she curated for the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, "Wide Angle View," contrasted international photojournalists' gritty work with more personal photography that often focused on their home lives or social concerns. She's looking to tour "Economy Portraits" (as well as "Wide Angle View") at other galleries. Somebody with deep pockets should help a sister out.

ginagenis.wordpress.com.



BEST PUBLIC ART

Cal State Fullerton's Outside Sculptures

The grounds of Cal State Fullerton are like a little gallery, with more than 30 sculptures, plus fresh air and sunshine to make it all that much sweeter. A brief guide to our 10 favorites:

- 1) Fallen David is a copy of Michelangelo's white marble statue that was shattered by the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake. The accidental artwork is located north of the Education Classroom Building.
- 2) Arise by Eric Goulder features a bronze figure either dragging itself up from a concrete block or fucking it. We appreciate the ambiguity. Check it out for yourself at the south entrance to the Visual Arts Center, building D.
- 3 & 4) Tombstones are always cool. Dean McNeil sculpted two out of granite, and they say awesome stuff, but we aren't going to spoil that here.
- 5) Look carefully, or you'll miss Lloyd Hamrol's adobe *Redoubling Wall Path* on the north side of the Visual Arts Center. It has been degrading since it was installed in 1976 and looks like a pile of dirt, but it was built with a grant from the NEA, so see it and piss off a Republican.
- 6) To the east of the Visual Arts Center's building E is *Nautilus*, Rico Eastman's rusting steel sculpture of an armadillo or an armadillidiidae or a lobster tail or . . . hell, something. We don't know what it is; we just know we like it.
- 7) In the atrium between McCarthy Hall and the Science Laboratory Center, Eugene Sturman's *Thermalo Vortex* qualifies as the weirdest name.
- 8, 9 & 10) Ray Hein's *Water Wall* at the east entrance of the Visual Arts Center looks like metal wallpaper buckling in the middle from water damage. *Wall Gazing Gallery* in the center's central courtyard is also funded by the NEA. Also in the courtyard is Betty Gold's sexy redwood-and-steel untitled piece. It gets our vote for the dirtiest sculpture in public view.

800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton, (657) 278-2011; calstate.fullerton.edu/news/inside/sculpture.

BEST FOUNTRIN

Spray Pool at Lemon Park Lemon Park deserves a visit even if you're not looking for watery relief, given the many historic Chicano murals in its immediate vicinity and fierce hoops games in which Korean church kids battle cholos, with the only violence being a well-timed charge. But from June through September, the Spray Pool delights kiddies and adults alike with randomly timed geysers of varying strength and length. Some emit from the ground, others from a weirdly shaped sphere in the center, and yet more mist with no end. The rest of the year, it stands as its own piece of Pop Art, although kids are known to shake the sphere in a vain attempt to bring back the summer, even if just for a squirt.

701 S. Lemon St., Fullerton, (714) 738-6575.

BEST RESTRURANT MURAL

Wahoo's Fish Tacos at Bristol and Baker streets, Costa Mesa Wahoo's needs no introduction, of course, but earlier this summer, for no reason and with no hullaballoo, the Lam brothers commissioned a mural outside the Costa Mesa location off Bristol Street. Painted by underground faves Bigfoot, Jason Maloney and Bwana, it's a whimsical underwater panorama, with smiling sea serpents, angel teddy bears and other random happy monsters taking up the entire back of the building. Facing Baker Street, the mural is painted in searing colors that will blind you if you stare too long, but it beautifully serves its purpose of bringing joy to your coming drudge up Interstate 405. Hopefully, the Lams don't stop there and will add more much-needed color to OC's non-Mexican restaurant scene. 3000 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 435-0130;

BEST INDIE FILM THEATER

www.wahoos.com.

Regency South Coast Village Even though Generation Xbox has been led to believe that movies are appropriate vehicles only for superheroes and remakes (which it thinks are originals), there are still arty people out there fighting the good, indie/foreign/retro film fight. Family-owned and operated, the Regency South Coast Village movie house not only uses REAL butter on its corn (and offers you the fresh kettle-popped variety, too), but it also screens every exceptional documentary, independent and export film worth seeing. To top it off, each Wednesday is Classic Film Night, featuring all kinds of retro fun, from The Ten Commandments to The Big Lebowski. About a buck cheaper admittance to all shows doesn't hurt, and you can get your intellect on with fare such as Vidal Sassoon, Cave of Forgotten Dreams and Bride Flight. So snatch up your most clueless friend or that complain-y, braindead teen or college clod and force them to learn that Arthur is Dudley Moore, not Russell Brand; the Karate Kid is Ralph Macchio, not Jaden Smith; Willy Wonka is Gene Wilder, not Johnny Depp; and that the upturned Poseidon did, in fact, carry the precious cargo of Shelley Winters. Oh, the humanity . . .

1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701; www.regencymovies.com. RENDERS' CHOICE: EDWARDS UNIVERSITY TOWN CENTER

BEST RUTHOR

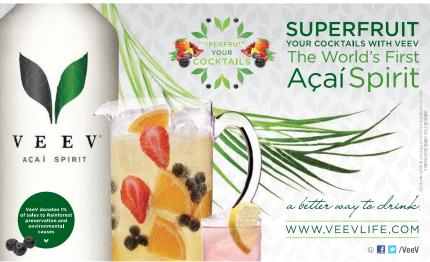
Victoria Patterson

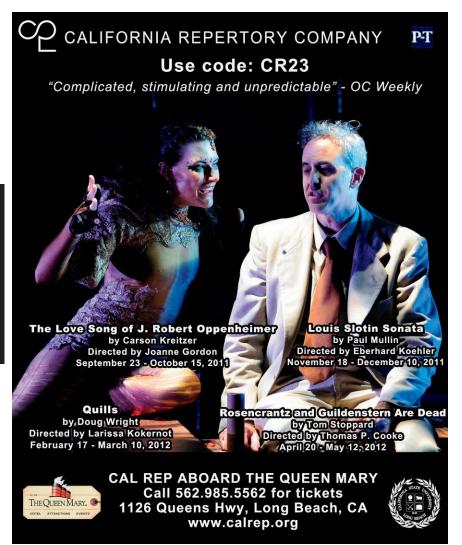
She rolled her experiences growing up and coming of age in Newport Beach in the 1980s into her first book, *Drift*, a collection of 13 loosely linked short stories revolving around the non-beautiful people of the moneyed coastal enclave. The *San Francisco Chronicle* named it one of the best books of 2009, and it



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was a finalist for the California Book Award and 2009 Story Prize. Patterson's follow-up, her first novel, This Vacant Paradise, is a modern reinterpretation of Edith Wharton's House of Mirth that once again leans on her hometown for its backdrop, although this time the action is set in the go-go 1990s. The New York Times Book Review hailed the novel as a recent Editors Choice. Another reason to love Patterson is her aversion to promoting her work via social networking. Writing for Three Guys One Book, she describes suffering insomnia while trying to spread the word about Drift on Facebook because "I found myself scrutinizing vacation photos of strangers on FB rather than reading or writing. For this, I blame myself, not FB." For This Vacant Paradise, the Pasadena transplant has stayed off Facebook (one year and counting) and won't tweet, and her Three Guys One Book piece is the closest she'll get to blogging. "Perhaps this is idealistic," she explains, "but I'd rather my work develop a fan base." It already has.

www.victoriapatterson.net.

BEST MUSEUM (NON-ART)

Old Orange County Courthouse For years, Orange County has treated the Old Orange County Courthouse as a place worthy of civil marriages, political rallies and little else. But under the direction of the Orange County Archives, the majestic structure is also moving toward provocative, intelligent exhibits-this spring was devoted to a delightful display of silent films shot in Orange County (complete with screenings and accompanying organist), and most of the rest of this year and next, it will host lectures, films and displays on the historic Mendez, et al. vs. Westminster, et al. school-desegregation case. And even on the off-chance nothing is going on, downstairs is the Orange County Archives, where Susan Berumen and her deputy, Chris Jepsen (author of the popular O.C. History Roundup blog), are more than happy to show off the county's treasures.

211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 973-6605; www.ocparks.com/oldcourthouse.
REHDERS' CHOICE: DISCOVERY
SCIENCE CENTER

BEST ACTRESS

TERRI MOLLIFELY, West Side Terri,
Monkey Wrench Collective
On the surface, a one-person show
reenacting the movie version of the 1961
musical West Side Story in a woman's
small apartment screams theatrical overkill. But in the highly talented hands,
legs and voice of Terri Mowrey, this
Monkey Wrench Collective production
worked seamlessly. She not only did
a stellar job replicating the songs and
dance moves of the original, but she
also managed to share insights into her
struggles as a performer and growing up
half-Mexican, half-Anglo in Southern

California. It was an entertaining-as-hell 75 minutes—both insightful and moving. Mowrey has displayed her considerable talent on local stages over the years, but this was the first time her full theatrical plumage received the chance to flourish. Oh, and anyone who follows her on Facebook realizes this chick probably sees more killer rock concerts than anyone this side of *The Orange County Register*'s Ben Wener.

BEST ACTOR

Greg Ungar, Waiting For Godot, Hunger Artists Theatre Co. The Hunger Artists' production of Samuel Beckett's starkly brilliant mid-20th-Century masterpiece, directed by Glendele Way-Agle, was a very pleasant surprise: entertaining, insightful and a masterful blend of lowbrow comedy and highbrow erudition. And, like any Waiting for Godot, it had to rise—or fall—on the strength of the two actors portraying the vagabonds at its center. And while Ponzer Berkman efficiently captured the more manic, physically oriented Estragon, it was Greg Ungar's Vladimir who truly exemplified the dichotomy of Beckett's piece. Paralyzed by the need to believe in something, Ungar's Vladimir possessed intellectual acuity bound by a deep, unfathomable sorrow. He was also delightfully funny, particularly in the intricately detailed dance he engaged in with his bowler hat. Rarely has this grand prince of clowns felt so keenly alive.

BEST THERTER WE NEVER WRITE RBOUT

Theatre Out

Oh, sure, if these were the good old days and a river of pure gold ran through the Weekly's newsroom, we'd have the room to run a theater review each week, and we'd write more about EVERY theater in the county and Long Beach. But that doesn't change the fact that the intrepid band of thespians that runs OC's only theater devoted to stories that comment in some way on the LGBT experience has received short shrift in our pages. It's not by choice: There are only so many plays we can squeeze into our coverage, and simply due to timing (short theatrical runs, multiple plays to choose from, the cruel reality of deadlines), since forming in 2006, the Santa Anabased Theatre Out has received only one full review in the Weekly. And that's a shame. While many of the plays have favored, in the words of literary director Darcy Hogan, "rich, interesting life stories over skin, sex and violence," there have been some quite striking choices, such as Angels In America, The Laramie Project, and Hedwig and the Angry Inch. And how we couldn't squeeze in a review of a play called Southern Baptist Sissies is just unconscionable.

At the Empire Theatre, 202 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 826-8700; www.theatreout.com.



BEST REASON TO SIT UNDER THE STARS AND LISTEN TO GIBBERISH

Shakespeare Orange County You're not going to get high-concept Shakespeare (Hamlet in outer space, Macbeth in a whorehouse) at Orange County's lone theater devoted to classic theater, but you are going to get a slice of the Bard infused with the intelligence of probably the person in the county who has studied and produced him the most: Thomas F. Bradac. Shakespeare Orange County always brings in a few ringers (i.e., professional actors who get real ducats for their work) in key roles and is supplemented greatly by youthful talent from Chapman University, where Bradac teaches. It's straightforward Shakespeare that focuses on his language, and while that language can be a little hard to understand for the uninitiated, everyone can appreciate the company's venue: the gorgeous, 500-seat Festival Amphitheatre. Shakespeare's plays were originally done outdoors, and this sterling venue, according to Bradac, amplifies Shakespeare's theatricality by dispensing with the artificial fourth-wall concept and forcing actors to be "on voice" while onstage, heightening the dramatic intensity of the words. The combination makes for as authentic a Shakespeare experience as one can have in the county-barring the occasional plane or Disneyland fireworks.

At the Festival Amphitheatre, 12740 Main St., Garden Grove, (714) 590-1575; www.shakespeareoc.org.

BEST PLAY

The Goat, Or Who Is Sylvia?, the Chance Theater

It was a play about an apparently happily married man and loving father who falls in love with a goat. Yes, a real goat. But in the hands of American theater's most idiosyncratic writer, Edward Albee, the 2002 play The Goat, Or Who Is Sylvia? turned out to be a great deal more. The Chance Theater mounted (heh-heh) the show last September (it was running during the 2010 Best of OC issue, making it ineligible for Best Play consideration), with director Marya Mazor eloquently navigating her top-notch, four-person cast through waters that could have easily capsized a production that aimed only for the shocking, dark-hued tones of the comedy. It was a serious, well-measured take on a very strange play that was far more about human-on-human love than man-on-goat romance.

BEST NEW PLAY

Becky Shaw, South Coast Repertory

Though playwright Gina Gionfriddo wrote it in 2008 and productions had been mounted on the East Coast, Becky Shaw was new to Southern Californian eyes and ears when South Coast Repertory staged it in October and November 2010. It was a deceptively deep play titled after the most elusive and, arguably, unimportant character. A great cast, led by a splendidly detailed and belly-laugh-inducing Brian Avers as Max, perfectly captured the ambiguity of Gionfriddo's masterfully executed script. As we wrote in the original review, "her ability to call into question the ambiguous, taxing nature of human relationships in a play that could've been just another in a long line of overly talky pieces featuring impossibly articulate, hyper-intelligent characters signals a dramatist of major proportion.'

BEST NON-HOSTILE THERTER TRKEOVER

3-D Theatricals at Plummer Auditorium

This young, theater-loving group of theater people, led by three siblings with the last name of Dawson, made a big splash in late 2009-10 at the wellappointed theater at the OC Pavilion. But after that venue was sold to the Orange County High School of the Arts last summer, 3-D needed a new home. It found one at Fullerton's Plummer Auditorium. The Fullerton Civic Light Opera had produced theater at the space for four decades, but the recession crippled that entity, and it had to vacate the Plummer. Then 3-D Theatricals stepped in and produced the 2011 season, saving ticket subscribers a boatload of aggravation. The shows were your typical mainstream fare, such as The Drowsy Chaperone and the upcoming The Wizard of Oz. It looks like there's more of the same in 3-D's just-announced 2012 season, but it has added a youthful injection of energy with Avenue Q and Hairspray.

201 E. Chapman Ave., Fullerton, (714) 589-2270; www.3dtshows.com.

<u>BEST THE</u>RTRICAL ENSEMBLE

Circle Mirror Transformation, South Coast Repertory

A play about beginning acting students taking a course taught in a small Vermont town by a former hippie would seem to fall into the kind of self-congratulatory martyrdom that many plays about theater slip into. But not this Annie Bakerpenned jewel: There was a reason Circle Mirror Transformation won the 2010 Obie award for Best New Drama, and the ensemble collected for South Coast Repertory's January production emphatically showed why. The five actors (the alwaysmesmerizing Linda Gehringer as the dauntless instructor; Brian Kerwin as her hapless but likable husband; Arye Gross as a lonely, recently divorced man; Marin Hinkle as an attractive refugee from the Big Apple; and Lily Holleman as an introverted teen) expertly mined the depths of their characters. They succeeded in transforming a relatively simple play about ordinary people into a masterful exploration of human connection.













BEST PLACE TO PICK UP A ONE-NIGHT STAND

Sutra

So you're looking to pick up some fine young thing for a little action—nothing serious, just a good time. Head over to Sutra, the glitzy club at Triangle Square where you'll find a bevy of pretty party people to choose from. The scene is very imageconscious—there's more silicone at Sutra than a Mattel production plant-and if you're serious about getting laid, prepare to throw around some cash: Money speaks very loudly to this very loud crowd. You and your new friend may not spend the evening discussing Flaubert or Kierkegaard-but you'll probably wake up with a big, fat smile.

1870 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, (949) 722-7103; www.sutraoc.com. REFIDERS' CHOICE: FOHFIRE

BEST ALL-AGES MEAT MARKET

Javier's, Crystal Cove Where do people of a refined age, wellestablished career and certain means go to find love (or a hot hook-up)? Javier's in Newport Beach's Crystal Cove. The coastal restaurant is decadently decorated, appealing to those of finer tastes, and boasts a giant, jungle-esque cantina complete with a fire pit, indoor greenery, and very expensive-looking seating and tables. The food is irrelevant for this group—it's difficult for most people to look sexy while shoveling carne asada in their faces. But what this Javier's offers is ambiance and location: Newport Beach is the mother ship for both rich dudes and artfully augmented women. For the gentlemen, who tend to travel alone or in groups of no more than three, it offers a fine selection of tequilas. Scotch and beer. And for the ladies, who usually venture out in small packs, there is a wide menu of margaritas and champagne. Enjoy the hunt!

7832 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (949) 494-1239; www.javiers-cantina.com.

BEST PLACE TO TAKE A DATE YOU DON'T WANT TO BE SEEN WITH

Riviera Restaurant at the Fireside We've all done it: Before going out on a date, we've chanted that one request—"Please, God, don't let me run into anyone I know." The Riviera is dark—really dark—and the menu is way too fancy for any of your friends. In operation for more than 30 years, this classic restaurant and bar has all the romantic standards: steaks, seafood, champagne, escargot and frog legs. You stand a good chance of getting through this one unscathed—and unseen. If you're too ashamed to take your date to your favorite bar, at least treat them to

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READERS'
"YOU WON!!
POLL

BEST PLACE TO PICK UP R DNE-NIGHT STAND Foxfire BEST BAR IN **DRANGE COUNTY** Crow Bar BEST DIVE BAR Goat Hill Tavern BEST PUB The Olde Ship British Pub & Restaurant BEST SPORTS BAR Rudy's Pub & Grill BEST GRY BAR Tin Lizzie Saloon BEST VENUE FOR LIVE COMEDY Improv (Irvine and Brea) BEST STRIP JOINT California Girls BEST PLACE TO PLAY POOL Diamonds Billiard Club BEST BAR/CLUB NIGHT Yost Theater BEST HAPPY HOUR Yard House

Yard House BEST BARTENDER Andrea at the Green Girl Saloon BEST MARGARITA El Matador BEST SIGNATURE COCKTRIL Rainbow at Aloha Grill BEST MARTINI La Cave BEST LOUNGE The Rooftop Lounge BEST VENUE FOR LIVE MUSIC House of Blues BEST CLUB DJ Marcus McBride BEST ROCK CLUB House of Blues BEST PUNK-ROCK BAR **Detroit Bar** BEST DANCE CLUB Sutra

BEST BEER SELECTION

fine food and drink. It'll cost you a pretty penny, but hey, this is your shallow insecurity, not theirs.

13950 Springdale St., Westminster, (714) 897-0477; www.rivierarestaurant.net.

BEST PLACE TO PICK UP DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENTS

Back Alley Bar & Grill

While we can't comment on friends who may or may not have made brief eye contact with a pretty college-aged lass before the two adjourned to the sidewalk outside Back Alley's large smoking patio for a brief romp, we *can* say the informal,

booze-fueled environment of the venerable watering hole is conducive to bringing strangers together. With Cal State Fullerton and Fullerton College close by, it's an attractive option for stressed-out matriculates looking to blow off a little steam. There's just something about that smoking patio on a hot night. The music from the jukebox is loud, and a large hole in the building's front wall grants access to the bar from outside. Suddenly, people who don't normally smoke are congregating under the stars and rubbing elbows (among other things) in a confined area. Those who lack game might be tempted to throw their hands up and grumble bitterly about Back Alley being just another Fullerton bar, but hey, most folks don't head there on a Friday night for stimulating conversation.

116 1/2 W. Wilshire Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-3032.

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD BAR, NORTH OC

Xalos Bar

Neighborhood bar? Transplanted community is more like it! The place where Xalos Bar makes its home was once "The Shack"—ground zero of one too many neo-Nazi shows, as the Weekly exposed 10 years ago. The times, demographics

and venue have changed, however, and "Un Poco de Jalisco en el Corazon de Anaheim" is now the prevailing banner for the establishment off the interchange for the 91 and 57 freeways. For all the young people with roots planted in the municipality of Jalostotitlán in the Mexican state of Jalisco and currently populating this northern OC city, Xalos Bar is a space to anchor their social lives. But enough sociological shit; let's talk puro pinche pari. Xalos' bar is fully stocked and offers drink and bottle specials, but it's not really designed for people to get liquored-up and lounge. The inebriation is aimed at loosening up patrons enough that they'll hit the dance floor, which tends to get more than crowded, so remember to put extra deodorant on, lest you become the cabrón with the cebolla-smelling armpits drenching your dress shirt. Live banda and norteño music, along with superestrella club, pop and rock en español DJ mix nights keep the beat going. Muster up some courage and drop a line to any one of the "AnaHynas" sure to be there on any given night.

1160 N. Kraemer Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 632-0390; www.xalosbar.com.

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD BAR, SOUTH OC

Turk's

Turk's is filled with the type of décor one might expect from a bar overlooking a harbor: fishing nets, ship's helm, giant ceramic fish. Some of the regulars live on their boats or work in the harbor; all prefer a bar where the drinks are stiff, the jukebox is always playing, and smelling like saltwater isn't grounds for dismissal. The walls feature black-and-white photos, most featuring Turk himself. The former owner is no longer around, but his bear hugs and handshakes are part of the legend. The beer selection is limited, but the pub fare is solid, especially the fish and chips. Plus, Turk's is small enough that there's a good possibility that if you go enough times, everyone will know your name.

34683 St. of the Golden Lantern, Dana Point, (949) 496-9028.

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD BAR, CENTRAL OC

Swinging Door

Sometimes, a bar is just a bar. It doesn't have to be a gastropub, it doesn't need to have décor, and it doesn't need to be upscale. Sometimes, strong drinks and a pretty bartender are all it takes. Add in some sports on the TV above the bar, crowd-sourced music (via a pay-bythe-song jukebox) and pool, and you've got the makings for a great dive bar. Swinging Door gets loud on the weekends, but it's filled with mostly locals; the crowd skews young, but drinkers of all ages show up, just like a neighborhood bar should be. Weekdays are more mellow; though there's no happy hour, the prices are cheap enough it shouldn't matter. And the bartenders are all scantily clad, which does mean it's pretty much wall-to-wall dudes. but this is no Hooters or Tilted Kilt with the fake smiles and the Valley Girl accents. It feels honest here. Pass us another giant PBR, please. 355 El Camino Real, Tustin, (714) 832-5214;

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD BAR, COASTAL OC

www.theswingingdoor.com.

Turc's

Not many bars have fireplaces, but the ivy-covered Turc's in Sunset Beach boasts two-one large fireplace with seating in the main room, as well as a smaller one in the backroom. Besides keeping you warm during those cooler winter nights, Turc's also has two pool tables and two Megatouch game machines to keep the entertainment flowing in this cozy space. And, of course, there's plenty of booze to go around. The tiki-themed dive bar may not have any beers on draft, but there's a good selection of bottled beers and hard alcohol available. The female bartenders are always friendly and know the regulars by name. It's a hotspot for locals ranging from older, wealthy beach bums to twenty- and thirtysomethings trying to get away from the trendy, overcrowded bars around town.

16321 Pacific Coast Hwy., Sunset Beach, (562) 592-2311; www.turcscocktails.com.

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD BAR, LONG BEACH

The Pike Restaurant & Bar There's no need for the Pike's dirty teal exteriors to convince you of its awesomeness. The place is so classically Long Beach and wears its dirtypunk-surf-rat aesthetic so well vou can smell the pier water from the bar (even though the ocean is about half a mile away). And while the Pike has all the prerequisites of the perfect neighborhood bar (you can come in a ratty shirt and flip-flops, and no one will care; the beer is cheap; and there's free entertainment on most nights), it also has great food: Try the crispiest fish and chips this side of Belmont Shore.

1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 437-4453; www.pikelongbeach.com.

BEST BAR IN DRANGE COUNTY

The Bootlegger Bar

If you've ever tried to get an outside table at Crystal Cove's Beachcomber Café, with its unparalleled view of one of Southern California's last unspoiled stretches of coastline, you know there's a 45-minute (at least!) wait. Fortunately, there's a seat for you at the Bootlegger Bar, a tiki-style tavern tucked into the shady side of the café and connected to the restaurant by an elevated walkway. With a full bar, there's a wide variety of tropical drinks to choose from, but if the swing-era oldies, pirate mural and vintage Hollywood posters don't have you craving a mai tai, both the mojitos and margaritas are wellfashioned and provide a fine pairing with the available appetizers, particularly the wonton-shell ahi taco sliders and the lobster croquettes. Besides the small fleet of barstools, the outdoor seating area is cozy and convivial and provides a nice respite from the summer heat and screaming kids down on the beach. If you're not already staying at one of the rental cottages just across the creek, you'll have to park across Pacific Coast Highway and either take the shuttle, which drops you right at the restaurant, or hike downhill and through the tunnel to get there.

15 Crystal Cove, Newport Beach, (949) 376-6900.

READERS' CHOICE: CROW BAR

BEST ROOFTOP BAR

Rooftop 360° at AVIA Hotel Bars in Southern California tend to be more waterfront than rooftop-which makes Long Beach's AVIA one to definitely check out. Its Rooftop 360° lounge is an upscale, swanky bar area with views of the coastal skyline as well as the Queen Mary. It looks very "summertime cabana," with its colorful chaise lounges and giant umbrellas, which is appropriate considering our fair climate is nearly year-round. Check out which martinis are on special for the month, and indulge in tasty bar bites such as taro-root chips and mixed olives. Plus, hotel guests can skip the cover charge (which is just \$10). 285 Bay St., Long Beach, (562) 436-1047; avialongbeach.hyatt.com.

BEST DIVE BAR

The Olive Pit

For those who want to escape the visibility of regular dive bars, Orange's Olive Pit is for you. Turn off Lincoln Avenue, and head down a steep street; around the corner lies the most secluded dive in these here parts, nestled into the side of a concrete hill, hobbit-hole-like. At the Olive Pit, they have cheap beer, pool tables, arcade games, year-round Christmas lights, doll-faced bartenders, peanuts in a vending machine and fried snacks available when the cook decides to show up. Perfect for those who crave a drink in a dark, super-awesome subterranean kind of place.

834 E. Lincoln Ave., Orange, (714) 974-9994; www.olive-pit.com.

READERS' CHOICE: GOAT HILL TAVERN





diane gershun<u>u</u>





nyone who has visited the stretch of vintage shops and quaint eateries from Junipero Avenue to Cherry Avenue on Fourth Street in Long Beach charmingly referred to as Retro Row, or anyone who has attended one of the area's many imaginative events has encountered the work of Diane Gershuny. The PR powerhouse tirelessly creates, organizes and promotes fantastic happenings for the Fourth Street Business District, from independent documentary screenings at the Art Theatre to the annual. much-anticipated Zombie Walk, for which undead enthusiasts young and old dress up to shuffle along the street. This month, the day-long zombie fest will attempt to break two Guinness World Records: the title for the most people simultaneously dancing to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" in one place, and the title for the largest Zombie Walk of all time.

Though it seems like she has always been here, Gershuny's solid place on Fourth Street was a long time coming. After graduating with a degree in fine arts, editing magazines in NorCal, and then working as a corporate heavyweight at Fender, she found herself along the coastline of Long Beach—and, since 2009, the social director of the Fourth Street community.

"I have always been an avid thrift-shop shopper and junkstore junker, so when I stumbled upon the Fourth Street/Retro Row area, I was in hog-heaven! After getting to know a few of the shop owners, I was introduced to Kerstin Kansteiner, owner of Portfolio and the president of the Fourth Street Business District," says Gershuny of her start in the area. "She asked me to help with promoting the street and a few monthly events, and that led to more and more opportunities. I absolutely love the people and the entrepreneurial spirit that is alive on the street. Not to mention, I've scored a bunch of great finds from fashion to furnishings along the way."

So what's on the horizon? Economic crises aside, the street is flourishing, and there are many events Gershuny has cooking, including the second annual Fourth Street In Motion Bike Festival. "I helped with the organization and promotion of the inaugural one back in 2010," she says. "We're starting work on it again for 2012."

her high scores

- Fourth Street/Retro Row. "I love strolling the street, chatting with folks along the way, and poking around the shops in search of that elusive bargain treasure—and I've found quite a few!" Fourth Street between Junipero and Cherry avenues; www.4thstreetlongbeach.com.
- The easy-going vibe of the area and its residents. "Long Beach seems to me to be a place where you can be yourself. There are so many interesting and creative folks here, without that hipster/trendy vibe like you find in similar areas of LA.
- Affordable real estate near the beach. "I never thought I'd be able to afford to buy a house in California, let alone a vintage Spanish casita in a historic neighborhood."
- · Concerts at Fingerprints. "I've seen some fantastic shows here, both at the old and new locations, including Peter Case, Dave Alvin and Pete Yorn—to name a mere few." 420 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 433-4996; www.fingerprintsmusic.com.
- Restaurants that honor the vegetarian/vegan diet. "Yeah, you can get a salad anywhere, but so few places have a plethora of options for us green-eatin' folks. Some of my local faves are Roots Gourmet for its sweet-potato fries, Kafe Neo for its veggie burgers, and anything at Zephyr." Roots Gourmet, 6473 Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 795-7668; rootsgourmet. com. Kafe Neo, 2800 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 987-1210; www.kafeneolb.com. Zephyr, 340 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 435-7113.

 Summer movies on the beach. "I love movies. but watching movies in the great outdoors is the ultimate experience. Especially at the beach—how cool is that? The cheesier the movie, the better, too. I have fun memories of seeing Ed Wood's Plan 9 From Outer Space a few years ago." www.longbeach.gov.

BY ERIN DEWITT >> PHOTO BY JOHN GILHOOLEY

- The annual Zombie Walk. "Yay for the passionate Logan Crow for conceiving and producing this unique event! I've been every year, and people are so into it! It's growing by leaps and bounds. Last year, I was a zombified Frida Kahlo." Downtown Long Beach; www.facebook.com/ZombieWalkLB.
- Live music downtown including Summer & Music concerts and the Funk Fest. "There are so many things to do for free in the summer here in Long Beach, and as a music fan, I'm a sucker for live music outside. . . . Free is good, too!" www. summerandmusic.com; www.lbfunkfest.com.
- Rosie's Dog Beach. "Although the dog beach in Huntington Beach is nicer, Rosie's is super-close to home, and my dog goes nuts being able to run leash-less!" 4800 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach; www.rosiesdogbeach.com.
- The view at night from the deck of the Queen Mary, "Several years ago, I caught a Lucinda Williams concert on the ship's lawn. The combination of the music and the shimmering backdrop of the city was magical." 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 435-3511; www.queenmary.com.
- Favorite video game: Despite the plethora of zombie-related titles out there, Gershuny declares, "Yikes . . . I have absolutely no idea about anything video-game-related. Really. No clue. Nada. Zip. Zilch. Zero. What was the question?'

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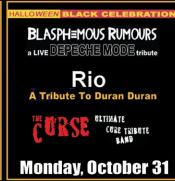


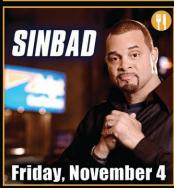










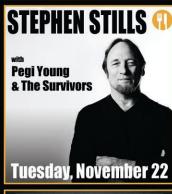


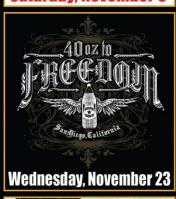




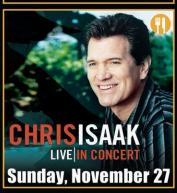


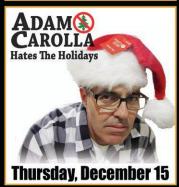






















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BEST WATERFRONT BAR

Tantalum

Tantalum is pure opulence. From the posh Indonesian-inspired décor (including a grand wall fountain at the entrance) to martinis with flowers floating in them, this waterfront bar stands high above the rest. While the dining section is lovely, the real star of Tantalum is the bar area, which features live music several nights a week that ranges from classic-rock covers to jazz. Choose among an assortment of luxurious couches and chairs, or grab a seat at the 75-foot, mahogany, litfrom-below bar overlooking the docks of Alamitos Bay. Order an Asian pear martini and the most exquisite calamari you've ever had—it really doesn't get any better.

6272 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 431-1414; www.tantalumrestaurant.com.

BEST PUB

Shin-Sen-Gumi Fountain Valley Robata & Yakitori Restaurant You might never get a loud, "NORM!!" greeting when you enter a bar, but at the Japanese pub Shin-Sen-Gumi, the entire staff welcomes you with the rousing sing-song "eera-shai-MASE!" the second you enter. Pubs in the Japanese sense are called izakaya-a house of sake—and like those of Britain, they're a place where you meet good friends to share good food, beer, sake and the other rice wine, shochu. Like beer, sake and shochu are brewed, not distilled. Though it's made from but three ingredients, the styles of sake vary a great deal in sweetness or dryness, aroma, mouth feel, and sting of the alcohol. Shin-Sen-Gumi is one of the places where Orange County's Japanese expats gather to sample a good selection of that country's major sake producers. It's the sort of lively, loud place that makes you wonder how the Japanese ever got tagged as quiet, earnest people. The music can range from J-pop to punk, depending on the mood of the place, and though this space is technically open at lunch as an overflow room to hold customers from the adjoining ramen shop, the izakaya menu is served only at dinner. And what about the food? Izakaya chefs prepare a special grill fueled with imported Japanese binchotan charcoal and cook up everything from jidori chicken and pork-belly-wrapped vegetables to diver scallops. But an izakaya does more than just grill food-the menu is organized into stewed, simmered, fried and raw dishes to represent the four fundamental techniques of the Japanese kitchen. Whatever you do, order some of the yuzu kosho, the green citrus-pepper paste that adds a powerfully fragrant, slightly bitter and salty counterpoint to the rich protein you're about to eat. Expect to pay the same as you would at a good sushi bar: about \$30 per person before alcohol. If you like to tour

Japan's breweries while you're there,

the tab can easily reach up to \$50 or \$60 per Norm.

18315 Brookhurst St., Ste. 1, Fountain Valley, (714) 962-8952; www.shinsengumigroup.com/robata-yakitori-fountain-valley.
REHDERS' CHOICE: THE OLDE SHIP BRITISH PUB & RESTRURANT

BEST STREET FOR A PUB CRAWL

Main Street, Seal Beach The small stretch of land leading to the Seal Beach Pier has an excellent selection of bars to choose from. We like to start at one end and work our way down-the same way you would start with the most expensive bottle of wine and work your way to the cheapest. Begin the pub crawl at 320 Main for handmade, vintage-inspired gourmet cocktails-the Moscow Mule is a must. Then mosey to O'Malleys, an Irish pub known for its frosty beers and finely made shots, such as the Tic-Tac. After that, stumble across the street to Hennessy's for cheap beer on the large smoking patio out front. Maybe another shot. Remember to pay your tab, then crawl down to Clancy's, the small, dark dive at the end of the street, for a pitcher of some form of alcohol and a game of pool that never seems to end. Finally, have someone call you a taxi. www.welcometosealbeach.com.

BEST PLACE TO BUY A GHOST A DRINK

Observation Bar & Art Deco Lounge

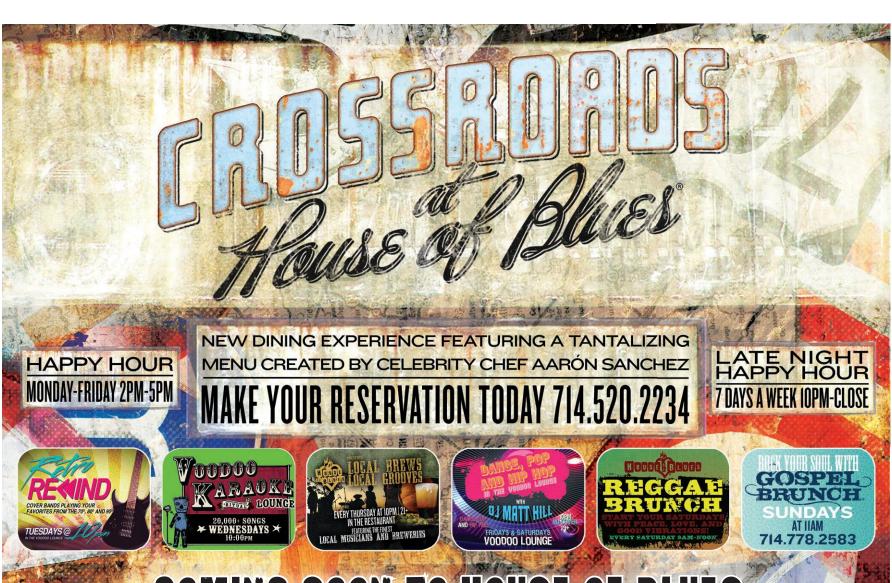
Only aboard the legendary Queen Mary can cocktails be sipped among the living and the dead. The notoriously haunted ship permanently resides in the Long Beach harbor and has become a historic hotel. It also happens to boast a lively bar that doesn't require you to be an overnight guest. The Observation Bar & Art Deco Lounge, with its 1930s décor and stiff drinks, must be a hangout for those ghostly presences still roaming the nearly 80-year-old vessel. Guests of the Queen Mary have reported sightings and paranormal activity throughout the ship, everywhere from the first-class swimming pool to the third-class playroom. The bar features signature cocktails, such as the Hemingway daiquiri; live music Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights; and a beautiful view of the harbor. If you happen to miss the ghosts in the bar, you can always come back for one of the haunting evening tours, including Dining With the Spirits and the Paranormal Spirit Walk. 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach,

(562) 435-3511; www.queenmary.com.

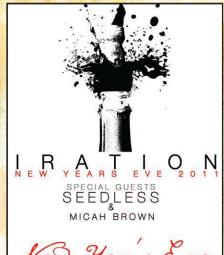
BEST KARADKE SPOT

The Prospector

It calls itself a steakhouse/bar/saloon/live venue, but that's probably just to keep Long Beach's best-kept secret—the Prospector's twice-a-week karaoke nights. Every Wednesday and Friday, regulars make the pilgrimage to this broken-in cowboy boot of a tavern to sing classics and deep cuts alike, making a night out feel like a family affair (amp up your

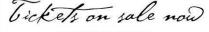




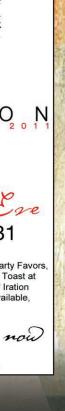


Year's Ere **DECEMBER 31**

All Tickets include Admission, NYE Party Favors, and for 21+ guests, a Champagne Toast at midnight. Preshow "Happy Hour" Iration Meet & Greet/Buffet packages available, call Box Office for details



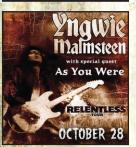
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performance level, and the whole room cheers with you). There are the karaokenight staples ("Total Eclipse of the Heart," of course), if crusty songs get you off, but if you want to sing Aladdin's "A Whole New World," you will find a willing duet partner in the crowd. And ves, Frank Zappa's "Dinah Moe Hum" is available. 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, (562) 438-3839; www.prospectorlongbeach.com.

BEST SPORTS BAR

Danny K's Billiards & Sports Bar Stationed just a short drive from the Big A and Honda Center, Danny K's Billiards & Sports Bar is a green monster Angel fans need not fret over, especially come playoff time. The warehouse-sized establishment owned by Danny Kuykendall is long on pool tables and wide on HD flat-screens. Among the 33 televisions showing the sporting events of the day are five glowing, 14-foot behemoths that you wish you could take home and set up in the living room. While gazes are fixated on the games, the waitresses at Danny K's serve a menu of classic sports-bar favorites. Touchdown pizzas are worthy of an "Ickey Shuffle," and the Snooker Platter's claim to be "food enough for two" is a bit of an understatement for this pile of fried delights. A wide selection of domestic and premium beers are on tap, waiting to be poured into pint glasses or 25-ounce mugs and promptly guzzled down. In the end, the best thing Danny K's has going for it is its spaciousness. The parking lot always feels more crowded than inside, even during big-game days. A little elbow room is always good, whether you're Andrew Bynum in the post or watching him on one of those glorious flat-screens. 1096 N. Main St., Orange, (714) 771-9706;

www.dannyks.com.

READER'S CHOICE: RUDY'S PUB & GRILL

BEST LESBIAN BAR

Unsipped at Club Ripples While there's never a shortage of party places for gay men, finding a spot for lesbians is like trying to find a dental dam in a bag of party balloons—especially in OC. Perhaps it's because people still believe the old stereotypes that gay gals don't tip, or don't stay out very late, or don't pound drinks like their male peers—or perhaps there's some truth to those lines (except the poor tipping, certainly). Regardless, a few power-women entrepreneurs do set up ladies' nights, and one such Amazonian island can be found every Friday at Club Ripples, provocatively retitled "Unzipped." That unzipping can be jeans or leather corsets, the hooking and unhooking of both brassieres and babes, and with a host of hottie go-go girls upstairs and lots of lusty lipstick and sporty lasses jiggling up the joint, Unzipped is the premier paradise of the late-night lesbian set. If only it could happen every night....

5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 433-0357; www.clubripples.com.

BEST GAY BAR

Paradise Piano Bar Long Beach is full of places to grab a same-sex hookup. Obviously, there's Ripples, the notoriously naughty beachfront bar, as well as Hamburger Mary's and gay dives such as Sweetwater, the Falcon and Mineshaft. Those are all great if you're looking for only a cheap drink and a quickie—but if you want to actually take your sweetie on a date? Go to Paradise Piano Bar. Run by the jubilant Eric Davis, Paradise is divided into two sections: the restaurant (serving dinner until midnight!) and the bar, a luxe stretch of counter space encasing wines from around the world and top-shelf liquors. (Be sure to stop in on a Wednesday for half-off wine night.) Along with live music and drag shows, charity events are a regular occurrence here—this bar prides itself on giving back to the community. And speaking of giving back, Paradise's outlook is that no one should pay to get into a bar in Long Beach, so save that extra cash and buy another round of drinks.

1800 E. Broadway, Long Beach, (562) 590-8773; www.paradisepianobar.com. READERS' CHOICE: TIN LIZZIE SALOON

BEST GAY BAR FOR STRAIGHT PEOPLE

Воипсе

Cozy, discreet and full of youth and fabulousness, Bounce draws a crowd that ranges from richest to poorest, from locals to tourists, from older to younger, from gay to straight. And they all jam to the rhythm of the DJs and karaokenight hostess Peggy Perkins, who spice up the night and play the latest songs by artists such as Rihanna, Britney Spears and Lady Gaga. The presence of so many straights doesn't stop this old-school cabaret from being a great spot for the same-sex set to find hook-ups, including hot silver daddies and sugar mommas. The most popular drinks include apple and lemon shots, various beers, vodka, and glamorous glasses of wine, all ranging from \$4 to \$30, with satisfaction guaranteed. For special service, ask for Michael and Gaby. Bonus: There is no cover charge at Bounce, unlike most gay clubs in Orange County.

1460 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-0056.

BEST VENUE FOR LIVE COMEDY

Irvine Improv

Reportedly, the Irvine Improv gets better acts than its counterpart in Brea. So, you say sterile wasteland? We say blank canvas. The beauty of the Irvine Improv is that, given the paucity of things to do outside the Irvine Spectrum (where the Improv is located), you're so grateful you can come here for laughs that being at the Improv automatically elevates any night to superlative status. And the acts are no slouches, either: The comedians are always cutting-edge (Kevin Nealon, Jo Koy, Wanda Sykes) and on-point, so you never feel that the tickets (about \$35 to \$40 on average) cost too much. And so what if the \$10 burgers aren't the best? Dinner reservations will always guarantee you a table close to the stage, and like everything



else in Irvine, the Improv is clean to the point of being . . . okay, yes, sterile. 71 Fortune Dr., Ste. 841, Irvine, (949) 854-5455; www.improv.com/comedyclub/Irvine. READERS' CHOICE: IMPROV (IRVINE AND BREA)

BEST IMPROV GROUP

Secret City Comics Society Though these up-andcoming comedians are just getting their feet onstage, the Secret City Comics Society (SCCS) still puts out a thoroughly entertaining show with a mixture of acts and games. Based in Fullerton, SCCS was founded by Alan Ng, a National Comedy Theatre performer with 15 years of experience. Feel free to take your family along for a creative night out, as SCCS boasts "a clean performance" for people of all ages. The act is divided into two groups: heroes vs. villains, with both taking suggestions and directions from the audience. Secret City keeps themes consistent, and the audience gets to decide on a winner. The group also teaches improv and hosts shows at local high schools. Performances are Friday and Saturday

BEST STRIP JOINT

nights, with tickets a bargain at \$12.

141 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste A, Fullerton,

(855) 467-7687; www.secretcitycomedy.com.

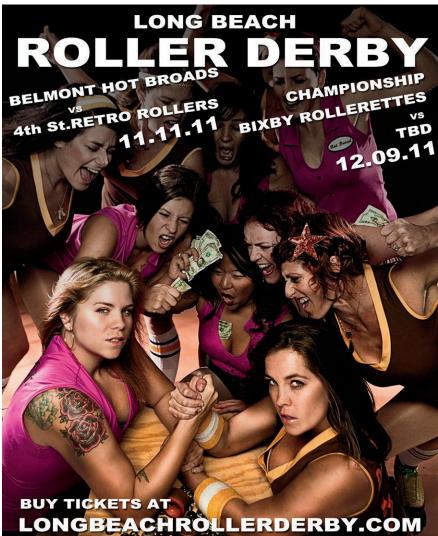
Venetian Gentlemen's Club We're not sure if this year-old gentlemen's club is the best topless joint in OC, but it's certainly the most novel: When's the last time you chomped on a California roll while a comely vixen writhed in front of you? Okay, maybe you party better than most, but that's an option at this clean, swanky spot that incorporates two of the Las Vegas Strip's most enduring passions: faux European décor (from the Italian-style fountains and lions to the murals that greet visitors) and bare boobies. Pay the cover charge (\$5 before 6:30 p.m.; \$10 after), and you'll find the stage and VIP room on the first floor, but a quick scamper up some marble stairs or a ride in an elevator, and you're on the second floor, where there is a legitimate sushi bar, offering everything from caterpillar rolls to Cajun-seared albacore with crispy onions. You can take one of the nine seats at the bar, sit at one of the many tables, or, what the hell, take vour dragon roll into a glass-encased room and summon a mermaid for a private dance. Bottle service is offered, and there's also a full kitchen with your standard bar-grub as well as a full bar (early-bird specials knock the price of a domestic beer down to \$3-they are \$6 otherwise-and cocktails start at \$8. And

you must try the jalapeño-infused vodka; you'll love it or hate it). But the sushi, which ranges from \$5 to \$15, is the real draw. Oh, fuck it-no, it's not: The women are smoking-hot, and private dances go for \$20 a song, \$180 for a halfhour and \$300 for an hour. 1421 N. State College Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 808-8500; www.venetiangc.com. READERS' CHOICE:

BEST PLACE TO PLAY POOL Diamonds Billiard Club

CALIFORNIA GIRLS

A simple bunch, table sharks don't require much beyond straight pool cues, plenty of tables to deal with high traffic, and a nice selection of libations. Diamonds Billiard Club provides these things, and then some, including faux-finished columns and leopard-print carpeting that loudly proclaim Las Vegas hotel kitsch. Located on a second-story floor overlooking Birch Street, this spot features 12 beige, 9-foot Brunswick tables-enough to ensure that even on a busy night, everyone, from sharks to guppies, has a shot at getting a table. And the room is cavernous, allowing ample space between tables, mitigating the incessant elbow-bumping one experiences when shooting stick at smaller joints. It also features a fleet of pretty, attentive waitresses who are quick to take drink orders and hoist food travs tableside. The walls sport small alcoves outfitted with cushioned benches for those just wanting to grab a drink while friends finish a game, and the wood-adorned, circular bar is equipped with a full complement of liquors and a moderate selection of brews on tap. If you're just interested





in playing pool, go on a weekday to avoid the crowds. Table rates Sunday through





Thursday are \$6 before 8 p.m. and \$12 after. On weekends, the hourly rate jumps from \$7.50 to \$15 after 8 p.m.

910 E. Birch St., Ste. 300, Brea, (714) 255-1800; www.diamondsbilliardclub.com. REFIDERS' CHOICE: DIRMONDS BILLIBRO CLUB

BEST BAR/ CLUB NIGHT

Mr. Mister Miyagi at Alex's Bar On the first Saturday of every month, punk-rock bar Alex's travels back to the '80s and turns into the most bitchen totally awesome party in town. Loud music, dancing and stiff drinks are aplenty, but no DJ is necessary here—this 21-and-over club night goes straight to rock and pop with live music from Mr. Mister Miyagi, a full-scale band with a catalog of hundreds of songs for your karaoke pleasure. Imagine a thousand of your closest friends getting down to that scrawny white kid bellowing some awesome Michael Jackson-this is what Saturday nights were always meant to be. A mere \$5 gets you in.

2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com. READERS' CHOICE: YOST THEATER

BEST HAPPY HOUR

House of Big Fish & Ice Cold Beer Partake of this happy hour just once, and brace yourself for a daily struggle to not ditch work early. The fun times begin at 2:30 p.m. and last until 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, which is unheard of these days. If you can make it there by 2:30 p.m., the items on the happy-hour menu are only \$2.30. As each hour passes, prices increase by \$1. You can feast on everything from swordfish tacos with cabbage and pico de gallo and \$1 oysters to barbecue-pork sandwiches and blackened-chicken quesadillas. The house margaritas are only \$5, with flavors such as blueberry, raspberry and mango. And with a name like House of Big Fish & Ice Cold Beer, you'd better believe they have a discount on beers: All are \$1 off. Well drinks and house wine are both \$5. But if you can't make it for the official happy hour, there is a late-night option from 9 p.m. to close seven nights a week. You really can't go wrong, especially with the spectacular ocean views.

540 S. Coast Hwy., Ste. 200, Laguna Beach, (949) 715-4500; www.houseofbigfish.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: YARD HOUSE

BEST BEER SELECTION

SideDoor

SideDoor doesn't keep hundreds of taps—this isn't an award for most numerous beer selection—but it does keep a well-curated, constantly rotating selection of great beers. At any given time, there are around a dozen beers on tap, ranging from funky Old Speckled Hen to dark Affligems that need to be nursed to a cast of characters from local OC brewers. The beers change as the kegs run out, so every visit reflects a different list. While draft beer is the way to go, there's also a selection of bottles and cans—yes, cans—available, and these tend to be a little bit more stable.

The selection leans more toward strong ales and sour beers than IPAs, but there are always a few options available for the hopheads. A couple of pints—real pints—and an order of the addictive beef-fat fries make for a very happy hour, indeed.

3801 E. Coast Hwy., Corona del Mar, (949) 717-4322; www.sidedoorcdm.com.

BEST PLACE TO DRINK BUSCH BEER IN THE DAYTIME

Joe Jost's

There are few watering holes west of the Mississippi older than Joe Jost's, which was founded in Long Beach in 1924 as a barber shop and pool hall. In 1934, after Prohibition's repeal, beer was introduced, and the barber chairs soon left. Since then, the bar has sold some 7 million pickled eggs, 15 million schooners of beer and 5 million Joe's Specials (a Polish sausage on rye for \$2.95). Oh, there's also the 1.8 million pounds of peanuts, which are roasted in the backroom next to the pool and shuffleboard tables. Change happens, if at all, very slowly at Joe Jost's, which is now run by Jost's grandson. In 1972, the cost of a Joe's Special was hiked up by a quarter—the first price increase on any menu item since 1949. But one thing relatively new is Busch beer. For years, Joe Jost's sold Pabst Blue Ribbon, but after finding out its beer distributor was selling the brew cheaper to other bars, they nixed it in favor of Busch. There's something comforting about drinking cheap beer (\$3.45 for a schooner) in a packed old-school beer bar (no spirits means a minimum of drunken, belligerent assholes) in the middle of the day. There are other beers on tap, but if you're not quaffing a schooner of Busch, you're just slumming.

2803 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 439-5446; www.joejosts.com.

BEST NEW WINE BAR

Two 40 South

The mark of a good wine bar is how well it brings people together and helps them disengage from the rigors of modern life. The newly opened Two 40 South is fixing to do just that. The dimly lit front room is outfitted with dark wooden cabinetry, a large glass window displaying wooden wine casks and a bar top for patrons to belly up to. There's also a tall, rockadorned pillar wrapped by a wooden table, perfect for large groups to gather around and discuss which wine from the thousands available they'll sip. Underneath the gorgeous arched brick ceiling lurk small alcoves with gauzy white drapes and lowset tables for those who'd like a little more privacy. The staff is friendly, accommodating and well-versed in the wine selection, thanks to firsthand experience and training. Last we heard, the wine vault is only half-full, but that's no big deal, as it reportedly has room for 12,000 bottles.

240 S. Brea Blvd., Brea, (714) 912-1053; www.two40south.com.

BEST BARTENDER

Jason Schiffer

The craft-cocktail renaissance sweeping Orange County these days can be











THE GAME OCT. 16TH





WEDNESDAY 13 & MICHAEL MONROE OCT. 19TH



ADRIAN BELEW



CRYSTAL CASTLES OCT. 26TH



BLACK LIPS NOV. 13TH



BIG SEAN NOV. 23RD



THE NAKED & FAMOUS





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10/15 CADILLAC TRAMPS THE GRABBERS 10/19 WEDNESDAY 13 & MICHAEL MONROE OF HANOI ROCKS 10/22 ADRIAN BELEW WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

THE STICKMAN (FEAT. TONY LEVIN & PAT MASTELOTTO) 10/26 CRYSTAL CASTLES

10/28 CUBENSIS (GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE) 10/29 DEAD MANS PARTY

ANNUAL HALLOWEEN SHOW 11/02 BABASONICOS

11/12 ELECTRIC JUNGLE (21+) 11/13 BLACK LIPS 11/23 BIG SEAN

11/26 **MAYHEM**

KEEP OF KALESSIN 11/28 THE GROUCH ZION I / ELIGH

12/15 THE NAKED & **FAMOUS**

12/16 YOUNG THE GIANT 12/18 PINBACK

12/23 THE GROWLERS

12/30 KREAYSHAWN

02/19 DARK FUNERAL **BELPHEGOR**

02/25 ENGLISH DOGS THE CASUALTIES THE CONSTELLATION ROOM @ GALAXY THEATRE

10/07 FORTUNATE YOUTH

10/08 THE ASTEROIDS **GALAXY TOUR**

10/14 BLUE SCHOLARS

10/19 **JOHN DOE**

10/21 MARIA TAYLOR

10/23 PICTUREPLANE

10/24 HE'S MY BROTHER, SHE'S MY SISTER THE MUMLERS AND **AMANDA JO WILLIAMS**

10/25 DUBTROIT (21+) 10/28 MALE BONDING

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FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE



BROTHER



LEON RUSSELL



OCT. 20TH



PAULA POUNDSTONE OCT, 27TH



OCT. 28TH



WET SPROCKET NOV. 3RD



NOV. 4TH



M-F 7AM-6PM

ACOUSTIC ALCHEMY FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE 10/13 10/14 10/15 **BROTHER**

SENIOR COMEDY 10/16 **AFTERNOONS** FEATURING

10/19

VINCE HARPER & MORE
LEON RUSSELL &
JENNY O
THIN LIZZY
DREAD ZEPPELIN
MELISSA MANCHESTER
(ACOUSTIC DUO) 10/20 10/21 10/22

DIANE SCHUUR PAULA POUNDSTONE 10/23 10/27 THE LEMONHEADS 10/28

PERFORMING
"IT'S A SHAME ABOUT RAY"
GARY SINISE &
THE LT. DAN BAND 10/29

10/30 11/03 **ANVIL**

TOAD THE WET SPROCKET 11/04 **FILTER**

WAKE THE STREET 11/05 **THATWASTHEN** UGLY PAINT JEREMY BUCK & THE BANG

MOTHER HIPS 11/11 **BROKEDOWN IN BAKERSFIELD**

STEEL PULSE 11/12 **STRUNZ AND FARAH** 11/13

ROBERT CRAY 11/17 **SHAWN JONES**

JAY & SILENT BOB 11/18 **GET OLD WITH JASON MEWES**

& KEVIN SMITH 11/19 LED ZEPAGAIN

11/23 **EVERLAST**

RED LIGHT KING THE TUBES 11/25

BERLIN 11/26

12/01 LOS LOBOS

PETER MURPHY & 12/08 SHE WANTS REVENGE

DON DOKKEN 12/10

X- (ALL ORIGINAL MEMBERS) 12/14

12/16 GARY HO HO HOEY 12/17 **SHAWN COLVIN**

A CHRISTMAS

TOGETHER CONCERT **NEW YEARS EVE** 12/31

WITH DADA 01/13

PAUL COTTON OF POCO

01/14 COLIN HAY BAND

01/15 **PAT TRAVERS**

01/22 **BLUES HARP BLOW OUT** FEATURING
JOHN MAYALL & MORE

01/26 **ALBERT LEE** THE FARMERS

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'
(JOURNEY TRIBUTE) 01/28

SAT-SUN 10AM-6PM

02/11 WHICH ONE'S PINK?

) best of 2011 ((calendar | food | film | culture | music |



SAN DIEGO BEER WEEK 2011

Celebrating Craft Beer in San Diego

Join us for the 3rd annual SDBW! A ten-day countywide festival promoting San Diego's craft beer culture, last year's SDBW saw nearly 500 events. In 2010, San Diegan brewers hauled in 17 medals at the Great American Beer Festival and 21 awards at the World Beer Cup in Chicago. Come taste the best beer in the world this November in sunny San Diego!

NOVEMBER 4-13 HTTP://SDBW.ORG





attributed to a small handful of people, one of whom is 320 Main's owner, Jason Schiffer. An old-school bartender with an eye for detail, he sets twists of citrus carefully on top of ice so the scent is there when the glass is tilted for a sip, without the twist disappearing into the drink. He spanks his herbs, placing them in his hand and clapping to release the essential oils. Schiffer is a tweaker of recipes, an inventor of drinks and a passionate customizer of alcohols. His Negroni's Loss is a sweeter, less-acrid take on the famous Italian drink; rather than gin and Campari being paired with sweet vermouth and a lemon twist, he uses Bols Genever for its funky maltiness and Gran Classico for a little extra fruitiness. (It's the little things.) Schiffer is also a mentor, hosting a group of professionals who research drinks and discuss the finer points of the craft, based on the noble idea that shared knowledge advances everyone's career, as well as helping to train bartenders. A passionate, skilled hand who wants to elevate Orange County's level of cocktail sophistication past the fruity freshman martinis? Yes, please!

320 Main St., Seal Beach, (562) 799-6246; www.320mainsealbeach.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: HNDREH HT THE GREEN GIRL SHLOON

BEST BAR SNACK

Peanuts at Goat Hill Tavern Drinking a constant stream of beer at Goat Hill Tavern (they have about a million different brews on tap) requires a little sponge in your stomach. For just a buck, you get a little basket of perfectly salted, crunchy peanuts—and for a dollar more, you get a big basket. Beer and peanuts are an indisputably winning combination, and here, when you're done, just throw the shells on the floor-they're already everywhere! They're not only for ambiance, but probably also to soak up the unfortunate side effects that sometimes occur when drinking said constant stream of beer.

1830 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa, (949) 548-8428.

BEST MARGARITA

Taco Rosa

Forget El Cholo, Javier's, El Torito, Acapulco's and the rest of the chains with their cheesy Cadillac margaritas featuring irritating salt crystals on the rim. There are nine different margaritas to choose from at Taco Rosa, everything from the "De Jamaica," which isn't ganja- or rum-based, as the Caribbeansounding name might suggest, but rather contains, you know, jamaica (hibiscus flower) to the mojito-ish "La Cubana," which combines silver tequila, crushed mint, orange liquer and the restaurant's sour and agave nectar. Also worth trying is the "La Flaquita": organic tequila with sliced limes and just a hint of agave nectar. Best of all, however, is the brilliant (in terms of sheer audacity, if nothing else) "jarra de margarita," which is simply a margarita of your choice served in a 64-ounce hand-blown pitcher. At \$50,

though, you might want to share this one with a few friends.

2632 San Miguel Rd., Newport Beach, (949) 720-0980; 13792 Jamboree Rd., Irvine, (714) 505-6080; www.tacorosa.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: EL MATTHOOR

BEST PLACE TO DOWN PITCHERS OF MARGARITAS

Yucatan Grill

Sometimes, you need just one lovingly crafted, ice-cold, puckery margarita at the end of a difficult day. And sometimes, you need a pitcher of 'em and a roomful of compadres to share it with. If it's one of the latter times, head over to Yucatan Grill in Seal Beach. The place can be hard to find for newbies, considering it can't be seen while driving down Pacific Coast Highway and a more accurate address would be Marina Drive. Despite wandering around the parking lot for a few extra minutes, the moment you walk into this Mexican-Caribbean cantina, any stress will melt away. The brightly colored walls and festive decorations feel like an instant vacation, and the fact that you can order your margaritas en masse doesn't hurt either. Made with fresh lemon and lime juices, instead of a premade mix, the margaritas here are always served stiff. And the warm service and lively group of regulars make them go down even easier.

550 Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. 111, Seal Beach, (562) 430-4422.

BEST SIGNATURE COCKTAIL

Sin-U-Rita at AnQi

Though AnQi's cocktail list is both imaginative and opulent, one mixed drink stands out among the rest: the Sin-U-Rita. Handcrafted using Herradura Blanco tequila, watermelon, jalapeño and rock candy, this beverage finds the perfect balance of flavors—subtly sweet with just a hint of fire. And it's all topped with a sugar-salt rim. Completely refreshing and definitely unique, this cocktail is so good it's sinful.

3333 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, (714) 557-5679; www.anqibistro.com.

READERS' CHOICE: RAINBOW AT ALOHA GRILL

BEST MARTINI

Sababa Restaurant and Lounge This dimly lit, modern lounge tucked away in the Marina Shores Shopping Center in Long Beach is home to the best martini in town: the LA Woman. Sababa's most popular martini is made with strawberry vodka, fresh muddled strawberries, orange juice, pineapple juice and Chambord liqueur, then topped with 7UP and soda water. It's like sipping a candy shop. Enjoy an LA Woman at the curved, sleek bar or take a seat with friends on the couches in the red lounge area. If you're looking to eat dinner, too, head upstairs to the main dining area for a meal with a Mediterranean flair-or take in views of the miniature, manmade lake and fountain from the patio. The majority of Sababa's drinks are cocktails with unique



uses of fruit juices and purées, but there's also a range of beer, wine and champagne available. Sababa is Hebrew slang for cool, and the venue delivers exactly that. 6527 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (562) 252-3572; www.gosababa.com. READERS' CHOICE: LA CAVE

BEST SHOT

Raspberry Kamikaze at the Reno Room

This vodka-based shot with raspberry and lime flavors is equal parts sweet and tart—and by some incredible combination of ingredient, it has the ability to make you actually teleport. One minute, you're slamming down shots at Reno, and the next thing you know, it's 3 a.m. and you're in line at Holé Molé. This isn't scienceit's magic.

3400 E. Broadway, Long Beach, (562) 438-4590: www.renoroom.net.

BEST FROUFROU DRINK

The Metropolitan at Watermarc Restaurant This Smirnoff vodka-based cocktail served in a martini glass (naturally) combines Watermarc's delicate strawberry purée with champagne and St. Germain elderflower liqueur. The result is sultry, sweet and bubbly-deliciously feminine, but with a serious kick. It's like a dream date in a glass.

448 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 376-6272; www.watermarcrestaurant.com.

BEST PLACE FOR AN X-RATED VACATION

Parkers' Lighthouse

Awwww, yeah, lemme slink alongside, strap my legs around your cylinder chamber and squeeze those searchlights, baby. No, wait, it ain't that kind of X-Rated Vacation. Perv. This X-Rated Vacation is a specialty cocktail served inside the turn-of-two-centuries-ago, Hotel del Coronado-esque, white lighthouse overlooking Long Beach's Shoreline Village. Most come here for a fancy-schmancy meal, but Parkers' Lighthouse is a ripping place to get your drink on. Sip an X-Rated Vacation while facing another magnificent SoCal sunset. You won't require a refill, as one is a liquor cabinet in a glass: Bacardi Coco Rum, X-Rated Fusion Liqueur, Peach Schnapps, Chambord raspberry liqueur, plus a little pineapple juice. Actually, any of the specialty drinks, martinis, bottled and draft brews, or sakes go down swell at Parkers'; it's just that the X-Rated Vacation holds the allure of possibly leaving you wet, nude and sore. 435 Shoreline Village Dr., Long Beach, (562) 432-6500; parkerslighthouse.com.

BEST LOUNGE

Commonwealth Lounge

Many of OC's illustrious watering holes are keen on attaching the word "lounge" to their signage. Some spots need to be reminded that most folks wouldn't apply that term to places with a funky smell and a barren, concrete floor. The Commonwealth in Fullerton actually lives up

to its moniker by offering thirsty patrons a comfortable place to sip well-balanced Manhattans and martinis in a comfortably outfitted room while spending idle moments listening to good music or chatting with hip people. The dim lighting is enhanced by the backsplash of the liquor shelves, which glows with an ever-changing palette of colors. Instead of positioning patrons' knees at table-top height with awkward, giraffe-sized bar stools, the room is outfitted with comfortable, cushioned, high-backed chairs. But the main event here is the music; the monthly calendar is heavy with DJ appearances (soul, jazz, funk and samba predominate), allowing for ample rugcutting on the dance floor. There are also quality live bands and hip-hop acts. 112 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-8888; www.commonwealthlounge.com. REPOERS' CHOICE: THE ROOFTOP LOUNGE

BEST LOUNGE IN HIGH PLACES

The Rooftop Lounge Sitting atop La Casa del Camino hotel in Laguna Beach, the Rooftop Lounge boasts the most breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean you'll find in Orange County. Guests enter through the hotel and climb a rather long staircase to get to the Promised Land, but it's worth the trek for the mojitoseven if one costs \$12. The hand-muddled mojitos are made with fresh mint and lime and come in various flavors (including mango, berry and pineapple), and each one is served with a stick of sugar cane. A visit to the Rooftop isn't complete without ordering a few appetizers: Try the warm baby brie with wild-berry sauce, toasted almonds and an assortment of crackers and breads, or the guava barbecue meatballs, a specialty of the house. Be sure to come at the start of happy hour-which lasts from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday-to snag a table from which to enjoy half-off mojitos, beer, wine and well drinks. The Rooftop fills up quickly, and

1289 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-2446; www.rooftoplagunabeach.com.

the views (both ocean and crowd) and full

bar are best enjoyed while lounging rather

than wandering around looking for some-

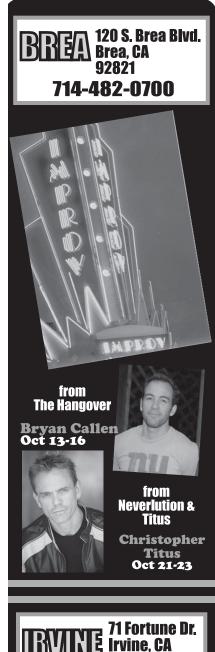
BEST VENUE FOR LIVE MUSIC

one to give up a prized seat.

Detroit Bar

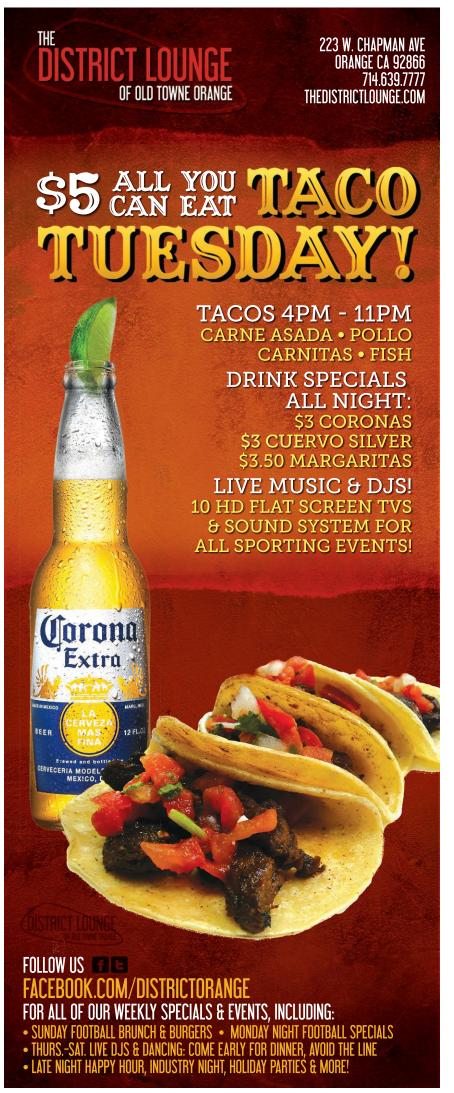
Why does this perennial favorite win again? Let us count the ways: One, it's small, which means you can look the lead singer in the eye . . . as he's a foot away from you. Two, it books great acts. And by great, we mean Cat Power great. Peter Murphy great. Yo La Tengo great. Melvins great. Three, booking the same caliber acts that often sell out in LA means Detroit Bar saves you the trouble of driving north for an hour, spending dough on gas and parking. (Parking at the strip mall is free!) Four, it's next to an all-night taco stand. How often can you get a bit tipsy at a show, and then fill your belly with cheap, fried goodness while waiting to sober up—without driving? Five, if for







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some reason you don't want to watch the band, you can always play pool or lounge around in the adjacent rooms.

843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0600; www.detroitbar.com.

READERS' CHOICE: HOUSE OF BLUES

BEST CLUB DJ

DJ Oldboy

What do you get when you put together two turntables, an esoterically eclectic collection of vinyl, and a blues persona with a penchant for harmonicas and tambourine? DJ Oldboy, a.k.a. Chris Lynch. The man (and his persona) has been a DJ for more than four years, after he discovered the Kbeach.org radio station at his alma mater, Cal State Long Beach. While he doesn't exactly make crowds move with four-on-the-floor untz-untz-

untz beats, his classic pop, R&B, blues, and rock selections (think anything from Little Richard to Brian Eno) turn white-as-fuck dance floors into sweaty, adrenalin-fueled soul revues. You can sometimes find Oldbov in Costa Mesa. where he deejays and books shows at La Cave and Memphis. But he regularly helms "Level 7 Access" at the Prospector in Long Beach every third Tuesday (did you catch that geeky Tron reference?), and he'll soon be hosting a monthly residency at

READERS' CHOICE: MARCUS MCBRIDE

Que Sera.

BEST ROCK CLUB

Chain Reaction
Orange County's finest

Orange County's finest all-ages club is the physical representation of an

angsty teenage boy. It looks (and smells) like a sweaty locker room. Every time you visit, Chain Reaction will be packed to the gills with 15-year-olds bouncing off the walls from too much . . . youth. Enjoy it. Get a buzz from eating a shitload of candy and drinking a ton of soda (as that's all they sell—duh), raise your fist up high and prepare to mosh. If nothing else, adrenalin is super-contagious.

1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, (714) 635-6067; www.allages.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: HOUSE OF BLUES

BEST PUNK-ROCK BAR

Juke Joint

What's more punk rock than a total dive that serves PBR tall boys for \$4 and most other beers for \$2? The Juke Joint stage is dedicated to ex-Nekromantix drummer Andrew Martinez, with a photo and a plaque honoring the musician who died in a horrible 2009 car crash. It's also a big local draw for its Latin-music

promotional nights, such as the off-the-hook Conjunto Nueva Ola/Leo Machado show. Such horizon-broadening efforts notwithstanding, the psychobilly/greaser vibe is strong in this one—the interiors are all black (of course!), and either Johnny Cash or the Blasters will stream out of the jukebox on a slow night. But when the place is packed and there's a live show, it's especially dirty, dark and drunk. The bonus? Everyone at the Juke Joint gets a tad bit sexier.

735 N. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 778-1397; www.thejukejointbar.com. REHDERS' CHOICE: DETROIT BAR

BEST DANCE CLUB

Butterfly Launge

Located in a Costa Mesa industrial park that also houses Jugos Acapulco and Gloria's Mexican Food, Butterfly Lounge is the state's first size-acceptance club. Mainly, it's a BBW (Big Beautiful Woman) club, but the less-Rubenesque are welcome, too. On any Saturday night, you'll find several big-bootied honeys gyrating on the small, wooden dance floor. On one visit, when the DJ switched from Naughty By Nature's "O.P.P." to Gwen Stefani's "Harajuku Girls," streamers and balloons filled the club. Each Sat-

urday, there's an
ass-shaking contest. Whether
you're a BBW, a
chubby chaser
or a scrawny
Sally, the \$10
cover charge is
well-worth the
good music,

fun atmosphere and lively partiers. 719 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-2243; www.butterflylounge.com. REFIDERS' CHOICE: SUTRA

BEST CLUB TO GET DOWN IN

Que Sera

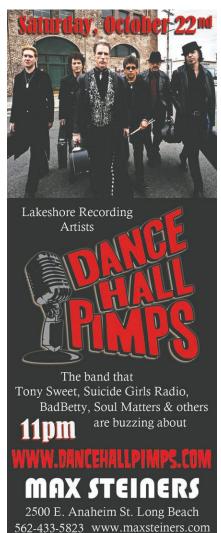
If you're a fan of tiny clubs filled with a ton of sweaty people smushed up against one another, dancing to good music on themed nights, Que Sera is perfect for you. The little black-and-red club is plunked on the cusp of seedy Long Beach and not-seedy Long Beach, and while the décor itself doesn't change much on the themed nights-including the Goth club (Release the Bats) and the soul club (the late Good Foot, one of the longest-running in SoCal)—the music and the people make all the difference. Like most great clubs in the Orange County/Long Beach area, it's a bit of a hole in the wall, but the unpretentious, distinctly un-meat market-type atmosphere and the fact that everybody knows your name makes it all the better to dance the night away-kind of like Cheers, except with movement. Bring cash-no credit cards are accepted here. 1923 E. Seventh St., Long Beach,

(562) 599-6170; www.thequesera.com.

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BRINGING BOLIVIAN SPIRIT TO THE O.C.





Since late 2009 niche liqueur brand AGWA de Bolivia has been steadily gaining a following in the OC area. Recently we stumbled on the brand perusing the drinks list at Chapter One, Santa Ana's leading cocktail bar. After speaking with the bartender we found that AGWA de Bolivia was more than just another "berbal shooter" brand.

The story starts on the slopes of the Andes Mountain's in Bolivia. It is here that local Bolivian farmers cultivate the coca leaves in accordance with century old traditions. The leaves are barvested 3 times a year and brought to the local markets where they are sold to companies that produce teas, flavors and of course AGWA de Bolivia.

The leaves are immediately shipped by air to Amsterdam, the historical home of some of the world's most renowned distillers. It is here that they extract the coca leaf distillate through a state of the art proprietary steam distillation process (similar to how the perfume industry extract flavors from delicate plants). This distillate is then blended with over 36 different herbs including Guarana, Ginseng and Yerba Mate to create this unique 60 proof spirit.

HOW DO YOU DRINK THIS COMPLEX ELIXIR?

According to Incan traditions, people used to mix coca leaves with lime as a cure for altitude sickness. This tradition has been recreated in AGWA de Bolivia's signature shot, The "Bolivian Kiss". Simply bite into a fresh lime followed by a chilled shot of AGWA de Bolivia.

The more energetic among us are mixing AGWA de Bolivia with Red Bull to create a supercharger cocktail. You'll know what we mean when you try one!

Our favorite way to drink AGWA de Bolivia is a simple mix with either Sprite or club soda and a fresh lime wedge, but we suggest you ask the bartender to come up with something new. The complex flavors set a new challenge for any self respecting mixologist, so you are sure to in for an exciting treat.



WWW.AGWADEBOLIVIA.COM

KING NEPTUNE SUNSET BEACH CHAPTER ONE THE MODERN LOCAL

AULD DUBLINER TUSTIN AULD TRISHER Orange SAVANNAH CHOPHOUSE LAGUNA NIGUEL

OCEAN AVENUE BREWERY LAGUNA BEACH

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL FULLERTON

2ND FLOOR Huntington Beach DAILY DOSE Irvine

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Best Waterfront Bar



fri/10/14





Looking Up DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

Yes, there is some irony in the fact that in 2001, Death Cab for Cutie released bitter anti-LA polemic "Why You'd Want to Live Here" ("you can't swim in a town this shallow"), and a decade later, lead singer/guitarist Ben Gibbard is now a Southern California resident (such a thing is kinda inevitable when you're married to actress Zooey Deschanel). But it's not something Gibbard hides from, acknowledging the inherent humor during the band's show at the Greek Theatre in August. This time around, they're taking it to the Fox Theater Pomona, promoting seventh album, Codes and Keys, on which they (mostly) abandoned their trademark gloom for a more optimistic tone, found in loveydovey numbers such as "Unobstructed Views."

Death Cab for Cutie at the Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garey Ave., Pomona, (877) 283-6976; www. foxpomona.com. 9 p.m. \$35-\$45. All ages. - ALBERT CHING

[THEATER]

Almost Alive

Cashore Marionettes

Joseph Cashore is a modern-day puppet master. Ever since childhood, he's had a powerful fascination with marionettes, and today, he's held accountable for single-handedly re-defining the art of puppetry with his small army of handmade dolls. Each one is crafted with such exceptional detail that their tiny, wrinkled faces seem to emote a range of expressions, their movements executed with such minute exaction that they almost come to life ... wait a minute, we've seen this movie. This week, the Cashore Marionettes come to town with two shows. Saturday's set is full of stories about the simple pleasures in life and is suited for ages 8 and up. Friday's Life In Motion performance, however, is recommended for mature audiences. Perhaps it's because it deals with hopelessness and death. Or maybe it's the creepy hobo puppet. Or the skulls. Either way, you won't soon forget the Cashore Marionettes . . . especially after you turn out the lights.

Cashore Marionettes at the Cerritos Center, 12700 Center Court Dr., Cerritos, (562) 916-8501; www.cerritoscenter.com. 7:30 p.m.; also Sat., 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. \$20.

sat/10/15

[CONCERT]



The Precious

LORD OF THE RINGS: IN CONCERT

Dorks, nerds, geeks of all ages, please direct your attention here! In honor of The Fellowship of the Ring's release a decade ago, Howard Shore's Academy and Grammy Award-winning score will be performed in its entirety on the Honda Center stage by more than 200 musicians in front of a giant screen showing Peter Jackson's gorgeous rendition of the J.R.R. Tolkien classic. But that's not all! As part of Lord of the Rings: In Concert, an exhibit of film props from the trilogy will be displayed. Described as second only to the official studio archive in New Zealand, this collection will surely dazzle all who choose to take the epic quest to witness it. Noro go hûl, bado go Eru!

Lord of the Rings: In Concert at the Honda Center, 2965 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 704-2400; www.hondacenter.com. 7:30 p.m. \$28.50-\$142.50. —AMANDA PARSONS

[THEATER]

The People Are One

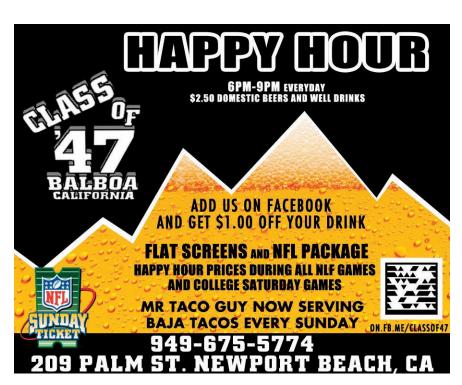
Eastman: Babel

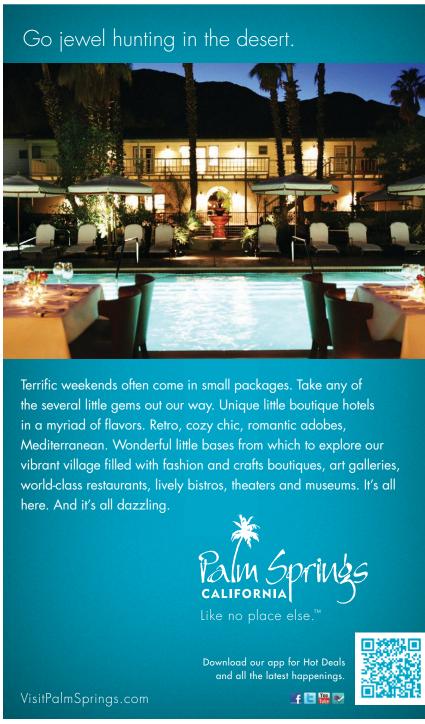
Let's say you don't know much about dance except to admire its elegant physicality and thoughtful energy-but then see the performance video of an outfit called Eastman, which turns out to be the dance company of Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, legendary Belgian-Moroccan choreography savant. You're struck with the inherent narrative, the pure pleasure of tracing the movements of the dancers, who are moving together and apart as if explaining everything about the show's subject, the challenges of language and communication, politics and identity in a piece called Babel (Words)—as in that doomed utopian language tower from Genesis. Where have you been? Does everybody else know this amazing work? And how could you not be there when the Barclay presents the West Coast premiere, all the way from Antwerp, with live music? Watch the Eastman video, with its iterations of language as physical shape, of humans using themselves, one another and a set to build a world against gods and fate and misunderstanding that tears them apart. I dare you.

Eastman: Babel at the Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-4646; www.thebarclay.org. 8 p.m. \$28-\$100. -ANDREW TONKOVICH

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sun/10/16



Making Noise

The Sounds

Way back in 2003, the Sounds took over the States with their shiny, power-synth Swedish pop—multiple singles from their debut album, Living In America, dominated dance floors and CD players. Fronted by blond firecracker Maja Ivarsson, the group were just what this country loves in pop music: good looks and plenty of hooks. Eight years later, the Sounds have settled nicely into their groove-thanks to multiple world tours—with well-established music producers eagerly offering their services. Catch them as they hit the House of Blues-the only California stop on their current tour in support of this year's Something to Die For, the band's fourth album.

The Sounds with Kids At the Bar and the Limousines at the House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, (714) 778-BLUE; www.houseofblues.com. 8 p.m. \$22.50-\$25. All ages. - ERIN DEWITT

[BENEFIT]

Halloween Treat

Monkeys to Go Benefit

There's so much more to Halloween than buying a greasy latex Austin Powers mask at a pop-up shop housed in a former Tower Records. Come see for yourself at this year's Boo-tique Market and Trunk show in Downtown Fullerton. The halfday event features spooky art from Pocket Full of Posiez, cakes from Jacquelynn's Cake Design Studio, and goodies from local shops Monkeys to Go and Ipso Facto. Classic Tattoo and Big Slice Pizza will also be on hand to offer special treats. Proceeds from the event go to a trust fund for the daughter of Monkeys to Go owner/local artist Chris Hammonds, who died suddenly of natural causes in his store in 2009.

Monkeys to Go Benefit at Downtown Fullerton, along Chapman Avenue, across from the Fox Theatre, Fullerton, (714) 525-7865. Noon. Free. -BRANDON FERGUSON

$\mathbf{mon}/10/17$

[FILM]



Make It Rain CARRIE

As the ultimate revenge film about bullying, this 1976 shocker adapted by director Brian De Palma from the Stephen King novel showed all schoolyard meanies what happens when you taunt telekinetic gingerheaded girls about their menstrual cycles, and then dump pig's blood on their heads-and it ain't pretty. Snagging an Oscar nomination for Sissy Spacek and even more horny groupies for John Travolta, Carrie proved to be one of the most stylish and successful of the King-novel films. Don't miss your chance to see this groovygrody flick on the big screen, and whiteknuckle it once again as the Bates High School prom goes disco inferno.

Carrie at the Bay Theatre, 340 Main St., Seal Beach, (562) 431-9988; www. baytheatre.com. 8 p.m.; also Sun., 6 p.m.; Wed., 8 p.m. \$5-\$8. -STACY DAVIES

tue/10/18

[EXHIBIT]

Gears and Things

'Steampunk: History Beyond Imagination'

Some of us may wish we were born in a different era, yet we can't imagine life without our iPhones, cars or flushing toilets. Conflicted dreamers can have the best of both times in the world of steampunk. It's the fusion of Victorian-era styles and modern conveniences, be it through fashion, science fiction or tools. Some of the more handy steampunkers have made Victorian-inspired laptops, Nerf guns and Darth Vader masks. Other inventions can be seen at Museo's latest exhibit, "Steampunk: History Beyond Imagination," which shows off comic books, clothes and art from the subculture. As for us, we're really hoping for a steampunk toilet.

"Steampunk: History Beyond Imagination" at Museo, 241 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 956-8936; www.museo. org. 10 a.m. Through January 2012. \$9-\$13. -TAYLOR HAMBY

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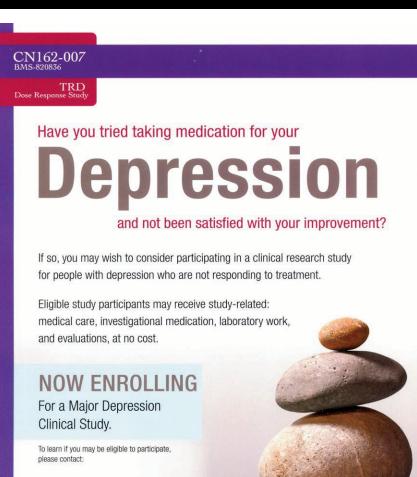


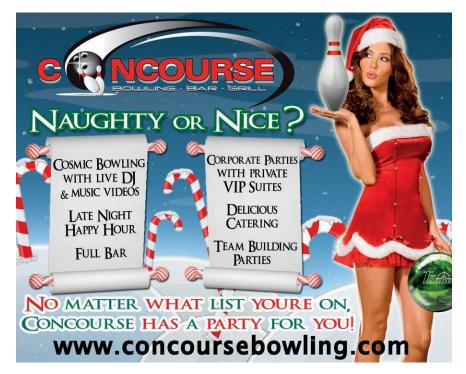
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wed/10/19

[CONCERT]

Down and Dirty

Shabazz Palaces

Ishmael "Butterfly" Butler first shook the national consciousness as one-third of the



Afro-centric hiphop group Digable Planets. Combining snare-heavy, jazz-looping beats with deliberately opaque rhymes about the Nation of Islam, Butler was a pioneering figure in '90s hip-hop. These days, the verbose thirtysomething lives in Seattle and fronts avant-leaning collective Shabazz

Palaces. Although currently signed to Sub Pop (the indie imprint that's home to, among others, Fleet Foxes and J Mascis), Shabazz Palaces are as grimy as project hallways. Their best songs approximate the antisocial feel of an urban dystopia. Few hip-hop artists build and manipulate tension so beautifully.

Shabazz Palaces at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0600; www.detroitbar.com. 9 p.m. \$13. 21+. -M.T. RICHARDS

[CONCERT]



Even if you don't know Leon Russell, you definitely know the people he's worked with. Dubbed "the ultimate rocksession man," Russell has jammed with everyone from George Harrison at the Concert for Bangladesh to Phil Spector as part of his famous team of musicians. He toured with Jerry Lee Lewis as a teenager, and he collaborated with the Byrds on "Mr. Tambourine Man." Between history and experience, this cowboy with the crazy white beard and gravelly voice knows rock & roll better than today's bands selling out arenasyou can bet that Russell's upcoming solo show at the Coach House will be nothing short of "blow us away."

Leon Russell with Jenny O and the Chris Daniels Project at the Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, (949) 496-8930; www.thecoachhouse.com. 8 p.m. \$35. All ages. - ERIN DEWITT

thu/10/20

[COMEDY]

High Speed Full Throttle Comedy

All the way from New York comes Full Throttle Comedy, a laugh-a-minute

showcase of some of the top comedians from around the country. You never know who's going to show up-perhaps someone who recently scored a Comedy Central special, or a comedian who not too long ago had that HBO comedy show. Or maybe that weird dude at the coffee shop with big dreams. Whatever the surprise lineup, you're sure to go from zero to funny on this pedal-to-the-metal ride . . . and other engine-related references that mean Full Throttle is a great way to spend a Thursday night.

Full Throttle Comedy at Brea Improv, 120 S. Brea Blvd., Brea, (714) 482-0700; www.improv.com. 8 p.m. \$15. 18+. -ERIN DEWITT

[LECTURE]

Into the Night 'Noche En el Museo'

As Halloween approaches, homes are decorated with spider webs and jack-o'lanterns, with bags of flaming poop popping up on doorsteps. Of course, someone's mother will appear in her doorway holding candy, wearing a witch outfit and cackling as if she's the Wicked Witch of the West (who's a bit buzzed on apple cider). Ever wonder where this image of a broom-wielding hag came from? Well, some say it derives from cranky Puritans dealing with the snow, but find out what Cal State Fullerton anthropology profes-

sors have to say when they lead a lecture titled "Noche En el Museo: Witchcraft and Authority In Colonial Michoacán, México." These aren't your standard witches-and you might be surprised by their status in the Purépecha culture. Also, as part of the event, professors guide a tour of the teaching museum, filled with wonderful displays of witchcraft in medieval Spanish and Purépecha cosmovisions and screen the spectacular short film Auikanime: La Que Tiene Hambre.

"Noche En el Museo: Witchcraft and Authority In Colonial Michoacán, México" at Cal State Fullerton's Teaching Museum in McCarthy Hall, 800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton; www.calstate. fullerton.edu. 6 p.m. Free. -JOE LAPIN





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ALEX'S BAR

October 30 | 8PM | \$25

Alex's Bar Halloween Party featuring Hard Copy Rebels and special guests.

2913 E. Anaheim St. | Long Beach | (562) 434-8292 www.alexsbar.com

ANAHEIM GARDENWALK The Empty Grave Haunted House Sept 30-Oct 31 \$13

Weekends only. Fri and Sat: 7pm- Midnight. Sun: 7pm-10 pm. Special dates Oct 20th, 26th and 27th 7pm-10pm. Haunted house to spook all ages. Check the Anaheim Gardenwalk website for current discounts and promotions!

321 W. Katella Ave. Anaheim 949.25.SCARY | www.94925SCARY.com

BLACKMARKET BAKERY BITE ME

October 22 | 11AM

Join Blackmarket Bakery for our Fall Open House with a spooky twist featuring local DIY merchants, sweet treat tastings, live music by Karma the Mirror, The Lime Truck, live art on cake, cake demos, raffles and more.

17491 Sky Park Circle, Ste. E | Irvine (949) 852-4609 | www.blackmarketbakery.com

BOWERS MUSEUM

2nd Annual Voices of Macabre

John David Keller, professional actor δ director of the South Coast Repetory's production of "A Christmas Carol' along with other fellow actors, present a series of readings from Edwin Gorey; Bram Stoker; Edgar Allen Poe, Stephanie Meyer, Washington Irving and more. Knock-knock jokes and other amusing parodies!

2002 N. Main St. Santa Ana (714) 567-3600 | www.bowers.org

CATALYST AT ART SUPPLY WAREHOUSE Sugar Skulls Holiday Open House

Oct 22 2 p.m.-4p.m. \$35

This class is back by popular demand! If you were unable to make it to the session last year, come on down to Catalyst and decorate your very own unique paper mache sugar skull for Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). Paint, glitter, decorations and a paper mache skull will be provided. Bring the family! Space is limited, so sign up today!

6630 Westminster Blvd Wesminster 714.891.3626 | www.artsupplywarehouse.com

CITY NATIONAL GROVE OF ANAHEIM Halloween: Black Celebration

October 31 | 7PM | \$15

Halloween: Black Celebration will feature popular tribute bands Blasphemous Rumors (Depeche Mode Tribute), Rio (Duran Duran Tribute), and The Curse (The Cure Tribute) on Halloween night!

Octoberflame IV featuring Tiger Army October 28th-29th | 7PM | \$25

Octoberflame returns to Anaheim featuring Tiger Army with (10/28): Swinging Utter and Reckless (10/29): Agent Orange and Stellar Corpses.

2200 East Katella Ave. | Anaheim

(714) 712-2700 | www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

DETROIT BAR

Zombie Prom

Oct 8 9pm-1am

Zombie Prom! Saturday October 8th, DJ Nikko and speical guests. Doors open at 9 p.m.; Free admission before 11 p.m., \$10 after 11.21 and over only. Come dressed to impress and see the ghouls dance the night away.

843 W. 19th St. Costa Mesa | (949) 642-0600

THE DOLL HUT

October 29 | 2PM | 21+

Celebrate the night before Halloween at The Doll Hut featuring BBQ, costume contests and live music by Fiction Reform, Civil Disgust, The Idiots, Brutus, The S.C.A.B.S., Zone 3 and more!

107 S Adams St. | Anaheim | (714) 533-1286

GALAXY THEATRE

Dead Man's Party

October 28 | 8PM | \$25

www.worldfamousdollhut.com

Halloween weekend show featuring Dead Man's Party (Oingo Boingo Tribute).

3503 S. Harbor Blvd. | Santa Ana | (714) 957-0600 www.galaxytheatre.com

GROVE OF ANAHEIM

Tiger Army

Oct 28 & 29 8pm

Southern California-based psychobilly trio Tiger Army is celebrating its 15th anniversary with its fourth annual Octoberflame with two shows at the City National Grove of Anaheim. Tiger Army performs with Swingin' Utters and Reckless Ones on Oct. 28 and Stellar Corpses on Oct. 29. 2200 E. Katella Ave. Anaheim | (714) 712-2700

HONDA CENTER Zombie Broomball

Oct 21 7pm-11pm \$20

Our second Annual "Monsters on ICE!" Come out in your scariest, funniest, sexiest or just be you and see the Anahiem Ducks take on the Dallas Stars, then AFTER the game we hit the ice for a monstrous session of broomball! This is going to be to die for! All the fun is just \$20. Tickets to the game and Zombieball!! Over 21 and over please to get on the ice, younger members may watch the mayhem from the stands. It is Co-ed and it is all about having FUN!

2695 E. Katella Ave. Anaheim | (714) 704-2500

HOUSE OF BLUES ANAHEIM Life & Global Dance Electric Halloween Party Oct 22 9pm \$15

Throw on a costume and head down to the House of Blues in Anaheim for a Halloween Party Got OC Presents: Haunted House of 80's

October 27 | 7PM | \$12.50-\$15 Halloween themed show featuring Past Action

Heroes and Rocktane
Limelight Presents: House of Boo
October 29 | 9PM | 21+ | \$20-\$25

A spooktacular costume affair featuring a \$500 costume contest!

Halloween with The Damned and Manic Hispanic

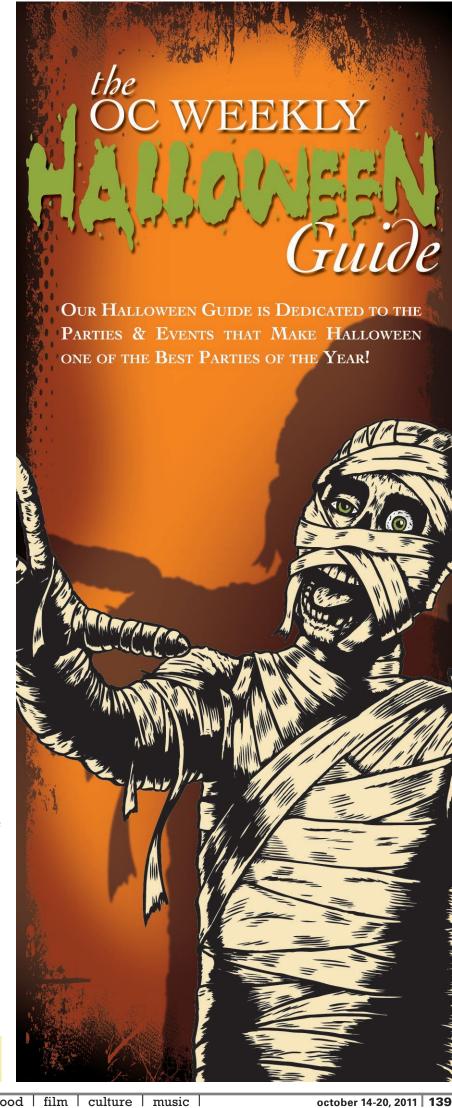
October 31 | 7PM | \$28-\$30

Halloween show featuring the The Damned and Manic Hispanic!

1530 S. Disneyland Dr. | Anaheim | (714) 778-BLUE www.hob.com/anaheim

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Halloween Boo-tique Market and Trunk Show October 16 | 12PM

Announcing a free Halloween Boo-tique Market and Trunk Show Giveaways, catering and more! Participating retail shops: Ipso Facto - gothic, Victorian, punk fashion and goth-industrial music Monkeys to Go - Rockabilly fashions, shoes, body piercing Classic Tattoo Big Slice pizza Special promotions from Classic Tattoo and Big Slice pizza. Featured Artisans: Cupcake Cabaret - deliciously delightful hair bows, jewelry, home decor Jacquelynn's Cake Design Studio - cupcake shots, cakes Pocket full of Posiez - spooky art, jewelry, accessories, t-shirts, stickers, pins, cards, dolls. 517 N. Harbor Blvd. | Fullerton | (714) 525-7865 www.ipso-facto.com

KNOTTS BERRY FARM

Halloween Haunt

Oct 5th-31st 7pm-1am 34-\$51

Knott's professional "scare-masters" transform the old Berry Farm into Knott's Scary Farm for another year of the world's first, biggest and most famous theme park Halloween event! Every year all 160-acres of Knott's Berry Farm are transformed into your worst nightmare with 13 themed mazes, 7 live shows, and 4 scare zones featuring hundreds of free-roaming monsters. 8039 Beach Blvd. Buena Park | (714) 220-5200

MANHATTAN STEAK & SEAFOOD Manhattan's Halloween Masquerade Bash Oct 30 7:00p to Oct 31 12:00a

Celebrate Halloween at one of Orange County's best fine dining experience. Presented by GOT-OC, join us for an amazing night filled with dancing, themed rooms, costume contest, and a variety of other surprises!

202 S. Main St. Orange | (714) 978-6161

OC MARKETPLACE

Special Halloween Concert with Gods of Thunder

October 29th | 12PM & 2PM | \$2

Celebrate your Halloween weekend at the OC Marketplace with performances by Gods Of Thunder (KISSTribute)!

14th Annual Trick or Treat Festival/Halloween Hearse Show and Procession: "Freak Out" October 30th | 9AM-4PM | \$2

It's Halloween at the OC Marketplace. Check out a hearse show and procession through Costa Mesa, Free trick or treating, Giant pumpkin carving, Freak Show Deluxe and more!

88 Fair Dr. | Costa Mesa | www.ocmarketplace.com

OLD WORLD VILLAGE Howling Hund (Dog) Halloween Pawty Oct 29 12pm \$12.95

There will be Trick or Treating for Kids and Dogs around the Village. Inside the Festival Hall and Beer Garden, Lunch will be served, Small Dogs Races (All Dogs Under 25 Pounds) and Pawtastic Costume Contest with amazing prizes to the winner including Signed Baseball by Angels Player, Night Stay at DogSpa Resort and Wellness Center, Improv Comedy Club Passes and lots more. 7561 Center Ave. Huntington Beach | (714) 895-8020

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PÄS GALLERY

Robots For Hire Presents: FEAST October 7th-28th | FREE

Monsters. Severed zombie heads. Man-machines. These are just a few of the sights PAS gallery has in store for you this October. Showcasing a collection depicting the darker side of LA based international artist Max Neutra, Robots For Hire has curated a show that will surely gross you out, fill you with dread, and make you stare with morbid curiosity. Come with a big appetite for the FEAST! Join us every Friday night in October for FREE live music from local bands with a portion of proceeds benefiting Orange County Children's Therapeutic Arts Center.

223 W. Santa Fe Ave. | Fullerton | (714) 871-2727 www.robotsforhire.com/feast

PIRATES ADVENTURE DINNER VamPirates Halloween Spooktacular Oct 8th –Oct 31st Shows starting at 3:30pm \$Call for Pricings

Celebrate this October at Treasure Bay's annual Masquerade Ball where you're invited to dress up and participate in the Masquerade Costume Parade and Contest. This exciting night of spectacle and adventure also includes a delicious 4-course meal. It has even been rumored that the Evil Captain Sebastian the Black is still lurking in the shadows, awaiting unsuspecting guests who would become prey to him and his horde of "Vampire Pirates." Care to join the VamPirates... as dinner.

7600 Beach Blvd. Buena Park (866) 439-2469 | www.piratesdinneradventureca.com/

RENAISSANCE CLUBSPORT ALISO VIEJO Halloween Costume Party

Oct 29 7pm-10pm \$20

Come dressed to impress, showing off your creativity for an adult-only night of Halloween fun! The Party includes a costume contest and prizes, our DJ's best goulish sounds, light appetizers and two drink tickets for the yummiest of our mixologists' shaken elixirs. Registration deadline is Thursday, October 27. Reservations will not be

accepted after this date. Early reservations are recommended.

50 Enterprise Aliso Viejo | (949) 643-6700

RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL

A Halloween Whodunnit

Oct 22 9am - 2pm \$19

A thrilling mystery unfolds as Pacific Symphony's Family Musical Mornings explores the suspenseful sounds of the concert organ and kids learn about each instrument in the orchestra. Featuring the popular work Lemony Snicket's "The Composer is Dead" by Nathaniel Stookey. Don't forget to wear your costume for this Halloween treat!

615 Town Center Dr. Costa Mesa | www.scfta.org

SHORE ULTRA LOUNGE

Oct 30 10pm -1am

On the Night before Halloween, Evans Lager presents the Hottest 100 Music Festival Haunted Edition fused together with Harbor Haunt 2011 which brings to you a one of a kind Halloween Experience with a Halos N Horns theme. On the Halos themed areas and stages you have DJ's. Electro groups, hip hop artists, pop artists, and various kinds of Indie/ALT/Pop Rock Groups. On the Horns themed stages you have Hard Rock/Metal/Punk/Drum & Bass genres of music. Come out Enjoy the Hottest Dance Party and Rock Concert all wrapped up in one huge Costume Party Extravaganza. The event also has Tasty Food, Industry Vendors, Costume Contests and Prizes for Best Dressed!

6200 E. Second St. Long Beach | (562) 252-8434

YOST THEATRE Halloween Masquerade October 31st | 18+ | \$10-\$20

Halloween party featuring LA Riots (Fools-Gold Records), Joaquin Bamaca (Insomniac Events), Daniel Minaya & Shane Vikus (Giant), J Cut & Jake Peterson (SNS), Mister Blaqk (Innervision Events) and more!

307 N. Spurgeon St. | Santa Ana | yosttheatre.com

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Start Spreading the News

harlie Palmer lost a good chef in Amar Santana, but to know the guy's upward career path is to have anticipated his inevitable departure. Santana began cooking at 16 in New York, went to the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park on a full scholarship and got hired after graduation by Palmer. Santana quickly worked himself up the ladder at his mentor's restaurants in New York, Reno and Dallas, culminating with his becoming the inaugural executive chef at Charlie Palmer's in Bloomingdale's South Coast Plaza when it opened in 2008.

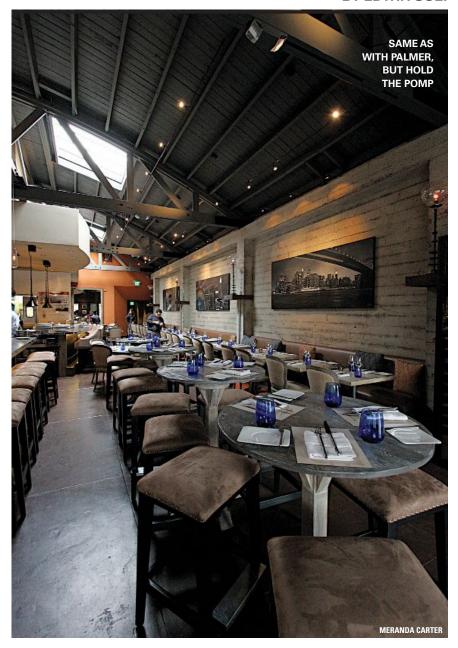
Now, freshly weaned off Palmer's empire, Santana has opened his own place in Laguna Beach. His Broadway is a hat tip to Santana's old stomping grounds, but aside from the paintings of the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline, there's nothing overtly New York about the place. It's decidedly beach-y, with light flooding from the openings in the roof and not one tablecloth in sight. And yet you feel Charlie Palmer's DNA and influence in the details, such as the plushbacked chairs, even as most of Santana's customers are dressed down in flip-flops. Broadway is what a Charlie Palmer restaurant would look like if you stripped off the outer layers of pomp, leaving only its muscle, brain and heart.

At Charlie Palmer's, you are never meant to see the man behind the curtain. At Broadway, Santana and crew are the main attraction. The kitchen abuts the bar and is on full display. Wherever you sit, you get a glimpse of the man as he peels, sautés, salts, and directs his cast and crew with the cool confidence of a seasoned pro. He's the consummate overachiever: Not only does he put out breadsticks at each table, but he also has a server offering three kinds of rolls from a basket wide enough for a load of laundry. Santana's terrine of foie gras-condensed into a thin line on the plate and garnished with bursts of flora and color-has already become the quintessential food-porn shot that tells you Santana's still cooking Charlie Palmer-level cuisine.

Those who are familiar with Santana's bio should also know of his passion for charcuterie. An impressive sampler platter heads the appetizer list, joining a dish of scallops perched atop a tangy, brightyellow sea urchin risotto, whose only fault is it fills you up too quickly. Because of this, it may be better to consider the scallops as your main meal and forgo anything else. Pick it over a main course of butter-poached chicken—a nicely cooked breast playing well with some Brussels sprouts and Hen of the Woods mushrooms—that's still somehow not representative of Santana's true talent.

The best way to eat at Broadway is to stick with the small plates. It's here where Santana cuts loose and reveals his knowledge what works and what doesn't. His Kobe beef sliders don't seem as juicy as when he made them at Charlie Palm-

Amar Santana's new restaurant in Laguna Beach, Broadway, would make Charlie Palmer proud BY EDWIN GOEI



er's, but the dish of fried Brussels sprouts with Chinese sausage is revelatory. Redolent of full-mouthed complexity, with a sweet-and-sourness that's never too cloying, this veggie side dish humbles even Santana's elegant chicken-liver mousse. The mousse is, by the way, wonderful: light, frothy, insulated by a layer of aspic, and decorated with pickled onions and potato chips until you scoop it up from its jar and onto grilled bread.

Even better is the roasted bone marrow, for which an oversized, pale-white club is bifurcated lengthwise to expose blubbery insides. It's important to note that the portion here is easily twice the amount Marche Moderne and Brasserie Pascal serve. And while Santana crusts the exposed face with breadcrumbs before cooking and finishes the top with

marinated anchovies, this marrow actually feels lighter than those of Broadway's French counterparts. You almost think you're eating something healthy, even as the grease you dab from your lips indicates otherwise.

For now, the service, while attentive (I never had to ask for a refill on water or request more bread), can be a bit harried, not yet as choreographed or refined as that at Santana's mentor's. But as the front-of-the-house staff settles into a comfy groove, perhaps it need only look at Santana himself: He's already there.

BROADWAY BY AMAR SANTANA

328 Glenneyre St., Laguna Beach, (949) 715-8234; broadwaybyamarsantana.com. Open Sun.-Thurs., 5 p.m.-midnight; Fri.-Sat., 5 p.m.-1 a.m. Dinner for two, \$20-\$85. Full bar.

HOLE IN THE WALL

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Mucho Mangia

EAST COAST DELI 18959 Magnolia St., Fountain Valley, (714) 964-5601.

S o it's come to this in Orange County: a Latino serving New York Italian food to another Mexican while talking about Volkswagen Bus memories in English.

It happened a couple of weeks ago at East Coast Deli in Fountain Valley, an A-frame-shaped restaurant that probably served burgers or ice cream in another incarnation, definitely not the refined Italian/Mexican menu it now offers. Owner Alex Lopez (whom I presume is a Mexican, but won't state with confidence lest he's a Salvi) knows how to prep pasta and hot dogs like any gruff East Coaster, but he can't help but sneak Mexican favorites onto his menu as specials—a great carnitas taco, fat dripping off the tortilla, or a gargantuan carne asada burrito. Want to wash down your ravioli with a mandarin-flavored Jarritos? You can here, probably the only place in la naranja where such a flavorful cultural exchange is possible outside when my mom makes fettucine Alfredo topped with red salsa—true story!

The Mexican items are only a small part of the menu, though, and Lopez pays the rent selling all the classics of an East Coast, well, deli. The cold hoagies can be wielded as a Louisville Slugger, as they are densely packed with meat cuts and peppers. The East Coast Hoagie—mortadella, salami, prosciutto, capacolla and provolone topped with peppers—is like a porcine turducken, the flavors of the pork cuts melding with one another until what reaches your mouth is salty, fatty pleasure. As delicious as that is, I usually favor the hot hoagies, jonesing for Lopez's fluffy, marinara-soaked meatball sandwich.

The pastas are fine (pillowy ravioli covered in a cheesy pink sauce), the hot dogs veer from the subtle chili on the Coney dog to the bastardized Godfather dog (marinara on a wiener? Sure!), and he also delves into the gourmet with a panini list ranging from the tried-and-true (a fine, if expected, ham and Swiss) to a chicken chipotle version that reminds you of the pepper's merits after too many lame interpretations over the years.

I didn't ask Lopez much about his restaurant history—he regaled me with tales of a friend who drove a Westfalia from Guadalajara to Southern California while I waited for my cannoli to go, relaying my order in Spanish to his worker. The pastry was fat, flaky and impossibly sweet, as great as any homemade cannoli in Orange County. Now, if Lopez would only top his lasagna with habanero salsa, like my mami does. . . .

GARELLANO@OCWEEKLY.COM

BLOG ON >> FOOD STICK A FORK IN IT BLOGS.OCWEEKLY.COM/STICKAFORKINIT



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MERANDA CARTER

Paleta Princess

Erin Whitcomb of Front Porch Pops

his week, we're grilling Erin Whitcomb at Chapman Coffee House, one of her preferred places to chillax (besides the traffic circle in Old Towne Orange) when she's not making her delicious Popsicles. Her Pacific Northwest roots shine through as she shares fruitful creativity and seasonal charm while discussing her Front Porch Pops.

OC Weekly: What are six words that describe your food?

Erin Whitcomb: Fresh, unique, nostalgic, refreshing, seasonal, delicious. What are eight words that describe you? Creative, friendly, passionate, driven, silly, loyal, persistent, inspired.

Your best recent food find: Keitt mangoes from Coachella Valley's

Tilden Farms. They're locally grown, organic, green and not stringy. I haven't used them [in a popsicle recipe] yet. Most undervalued ingredient:

Lemon juice-even if you can't taste it, it's still doing its job in the background, balancing flavors.

Rules of conduct in your kitchen: Check everything else going on in your life at the door; it'll be there waiting when you're done, and the time not spent thinking about it might reveal a new perspective. One food vou detest.

Mushrooms: The texture just doesn't agree with me.

One food you can't live without: Oranges! They're so versatile and fresh. I'm always drawn to orange-centric dishes. The huge range of citrus here in SoCal is kind of an obsession of mine. Culinarily speaking, Orange County has the best:

ON THE LINE » ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Vegan and vegetarian fare. I was vegetarian for about six years. Seabirds does it right. What fast food do you admit to eating? Subway is pretty much the only fast food that doesn't make me feel yucky afterward. Best culinary tip for the home cook: Make a trip to a farmers' market part of your weekly routine. Even if you only buy enough for one meal, it'll be shockingly fresh, and it'll make you want to cook more often. You'd be floored by how long some produce sits in cold storage before it goes to a grocery store and how the flavor suffers as a result. After-work hangout:

The Circle in Old Towne Orange. Whether I'm having coffee with a friend or catching up with my fiance after a long day, it seems I always find myself chatting on a bench down there.

Favorite celebrity chef.

I worked the line with chef Tom Douglas at a fund-raising dinner for the community garden I belonged to back in Seattle. All I was doing was plating salad at his elbow, but the conversation I had with him that evening and at some other events I did with him made me realize that I belong in the kitchen, that I needed to follow my passion.

Celebrity chef who should shut up. Any chef who acts like a big-mouth kitchen jock. If ego were needed to make great food, they'd make it a spice. Favorite music to cook by:

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 146













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food»



Paleta Princess » FROM PAGE 145

A little bit of everything, but I always circle back to Muse, the Pixies and Modest Mouse. Best food city in America:

Will everyone hate me if I say Seattle since that's where I'm from? Nothing beats buying crazy-fresh seafood right off the fishing boats, and nothing here comes close except for Slapfish. The chef knows his fish-intimately even. Wait, that doesn't sound quite right, does it? What you'd like to see more of in Orange County from a culinary standpoint: Awesome breakfast joints and late-night dining. It's hard to find late-night places close to home, but I do like Gypsy Den. What you'd like to see less of in Orange County from a culinary standpoint: Chain restaurants. I'm a city girl at heart, and I wish there were more independent restaurants and coffeehouses.

Favorite cookbooks: Rover's by chef Thierry Rautereau—his recipe for Pinot Noir sorbet changed my life-and all of chef Tom Douglas' catalog. Oh, and Cooking Light; its editors taught me how to build flavor without making a dish unhealthy.

When you're not in the kitchen cooking, what are you doing?

Walking my dog, Molly McBoozehound; watching movies with my fiance; or doing something crafty.

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten: Bone marrow. It would never have crossed my mind.

You're making breakfast. What are

Hazelnut stuffed french toast with bacon, hash browns, fresh fruit and profoundly strong coffee.

You're at the market. What do you buy two of? Stone fruits from Sweet Tree Farms! The season is almost over, so I'm stocking up on as much of it as I can get my hands on. Weirdest customer request:

Adzuki bean pops; it's an Asian-inspired red-bean popsicle. I'm working on perfecting it right now, so one of my customers can surprise his wife for her birthday. Hardest lesson you've learned:

Equipment failures happen, and they're

stupid expensive, especially when you use specialty equipment imported from abroad. What would your last meal on Earth be? My mom's orange chicken.

Who's your hero, culinary or otherwise? Okay, I'm a big, big nerd for admitting this, but . . . Buffy the Vampire Slayer. She's totally badass, hilarious and resourceful. Tell us about your food-serviceindustry background.

Cooking has always been my passion. I cooked my first Thanksgiving dinner when I was 15, but I decided to go to college instead of culinary school. After college, I was an event planner for a PBS station, and I dabbled in catering, but I

"I was afraid I wouldn't love it anymore if I cooked for a living, but when I got laid off, I had the latitude to give it a try, and so far, I love it!"

was hesitant to make my hobby a career. I was afraid I wouldn't love it anymore if I cooked for a living, but when I got laid off, I had the latitude to give it a try, and so far, I love it!

How did Front Porch Pops get its name? I was overwhelmed by this huge brainstorm of literally 80-plus names I was considering, and then one night I was walking my dog around Old Towne Orange and thought, "This is what I love about this place—all the porches." Front porches remind me of all those simple pleasures that come along with being a kid: running through the sprinkler, riding my bike, or eating pops on the porch with my little brother. So I ditched the list, and Front Porch Pops was born.

We hear you also do fund-raising events? I spent the first part of my career in the nonprofit realm, and I know how much work it is to put on a fund-raiser. I see school programs being cut all the time, things like art, sports and music that help kids stay out of mischief and become wellrounded people. There's only so much you can do with a bake sale, and parents are already super-busy as it is, so I want

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 149



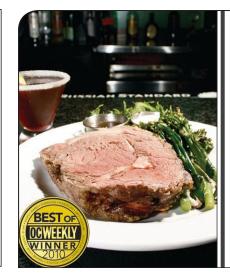
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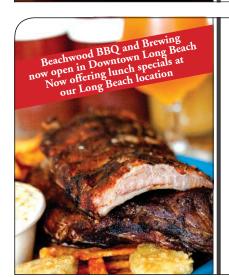


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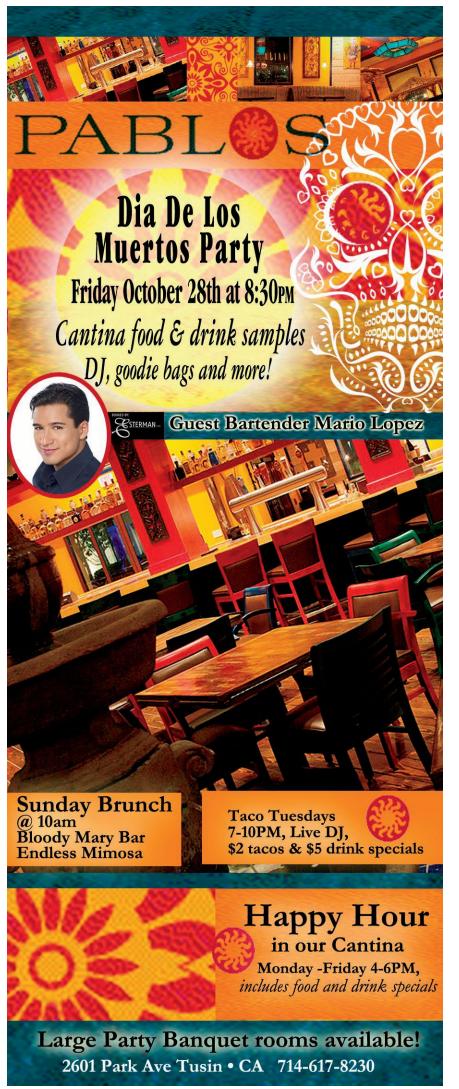
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Paleta Princess

» FROM PAGE 146

to make it easy. We show up to an event (like a football game or an assembly), sell our pops, and give the school or group a percentage of the profit, as big a percentage as we can manage. As a small-business owner, I have to cover my costs, but I want this business to support the community. What exactly is a "cold-storage refrigeration micro-computer temperature controller"? [Editor's Note: It broke down on her recently. Refer to Erin's response to the hardest lesson she's learned.]

You know how when you make your own popsicles at home, they have a gritty, icy texture? It's because your freezer doesn't get cold enough to prevent ice crystals from forming. We use a fancy Brazilian quick freeze that gets crazy cold, so our pops always have a smooth texture without loading 'em up with unnecessary sugar. That microcomputer thingy controls how cold the freezer gets. What's the most popular flavor so far, and

What's the most popular flavor so far, and what flavors didn't make the cut?
Strawberry Lemonade is the all-time best-seller, but Whoa! Watermelon!, Creamy Vanilla Caramel and Monkey Gone to Heaven (dark chocolate with roasted bananas) are all new ones that are catching up quick. Abomination flavors? Orange Buttermilk has never turned out the way I want it to, but that's really the only one I've abandoned entirely. Any seasonal flavors we can look forward to? Pumpkin Spice, Caramel Apple, Clove

working on new flavors. What dish pop would you tell newcomers to Front Porch Pops to try first?

Peach and many more. . . . I'm always

Oh, man, that totally depends. Are you in the mood for fruity or creamy? Tart or sweet? If you like classic flavors, I'd start with Strawberry Lemonade, but if you're feeling more adventurous, I'd try Grilled Pineapple. What would you be doing if you weren't in this business?

I'd be a struggling screenwriter working a 9-to-5 marketing job to get by. What advice do you have for those who might be thinking about a career in food? Don't be a copycat. Do what you do better than anyone else, while always putting your customers first. There's a lot of competition out there, but there's also a lot of mediocrity. If you settle for nothing but the best, customers will recognize that, and it'll bring them back over and over. I never thought in a million years I'd have "regulars" after being in business just a couple of months, but I do, and I think it's

couple of months, but I do, and I think it's because people appreciate quality.

What do you see yourself doing in five years? Ten years?

I see myself building an empire out of popsicle sticks! We'll be expanding with more carts in more cities and offering our pops in select retail locations.

FRONT PORCH POPS

can be found online at www.frontporchpops. com, twitter.com/frontporchpops and facebook.com/frontporchpops.



Watermelon Pops

Yields 30 ounces of pop batter.

INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 cups ripe watermelon, chopped (seedless makes life easier)

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup water

1 1/2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

2 pinches kosher salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Blender

Wire-mesh strainer
Ice-pop mold (Whitcomb likes the Norpro
Ice Pop Maker available from Amazon), but
small paper cups will also work
Pop sticks (you can get these from the
craft store)

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small sauce pan, combine the sugar and water. Place over medium or medium-high heat and bring to a simmer for two minutes or until sugar is completely dissolved. Let it cool.

2. Chop and measure the watermelon and add it to the blender, watching out for seeds. (Or, if you bought seedless, this is the part where you can pause and sip your martini.) Add the lemon juice, salt and sugar/water mixture, then blend for one to two minutes or until watermelon is completely puréed and smooth.

3. Pour the mixture through a wire-mesh strainer into a pitcher to catch any bits of seeds that didn't get blended. Pour the mixture into your molds, leaving 1/4 inch of space at the top. If you're using paper-cup molds, you'll need to pop the cups into the freezer for a couple of hours before adding the sticks. Otherwise, they'll keep floating up, and that's, well . . . just really frustrating.

Note: Are you surprised by how much sugar these contain? Well, the pops you get from the Front Porch Pops cart are made by using a fancy quick-freeze, which enables Whitcomb to keep the texture smooth and the flavor fabulous without needing lots of sugar. When making pops at home, sugar helps prevent an icy, gritty texture. If you don't mind the pops being a little icy, then, by all means, reduce the sugar in this recipe. The flavor will still be "super-watermelony." ("That's a technical term, by the way," Whitcomb says, "super-watermelony . . .")



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DRINKOFTHE**W**EEK

» JACK GRIMSHAW

Piraat at Hollingshead's Deli

t was a vision from hell. For seafarers in t was a vision from non, for course, there was no sight more bowel-loosening than a horde of no-quarter-given-or-sought pirates swarming over your taffrail with cudgels, cutlasses, battle axes and bad intent. (If Edward "Blackbeard" Teach was leading them, he had three brace of holstered pistols and lighted matches stuck under his hat, and he might just nail your entrails to the mast and make you dance.) The invaders were screaming, bloodthirsty and drunk. On lengthy voyages, water in casks turned bad and was often difficult to replenish. Triple-strength ale—three times the normal amount of barley malt—stayed fresh for a long time, felt almost like a meal and packed a huge punch. A daily ration kept crew members content. Unlimited quantities before an engagement? They turned frothing-at-the-mouth berserk.

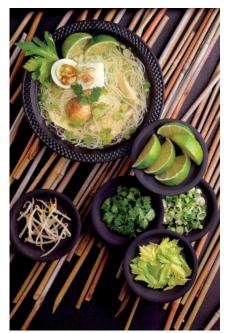
A direct descendant of the Skull and Crossbones brew is the aptly named Piraat, a lethal Belgian ale that goes down

extremely well with the awesome custommade sandwich selection at Hollingshead's Deli in Orange.

THE DRINK

Caveat emptor. This ain't from your crap Corona/Bud/Miller school of circuslemonade suds. Refermented in the bottle and keg, it's a "living" beer that packs a mighty 10.5 percent alcohol by volume. Rich, fruity and spicy, it has a hugely complex aroma and subtle flavors. It can be an acquired taste . . . one that's well-worth acquiring. Piraat pours with a cloudy, deep, golden color and a thick head that retains well. Imbibe judiciously, or the thick head will be yours tomorrow. It can also be used to swab the decks or put hair on your chest. Aaaargh!! From an Oct. 7 Stick a Fork In It post.

HOLLINGSHEAD'S DELI 368 S. Main St., Orange, (714) 978-9467; www.hollingsheadsdeli.com.



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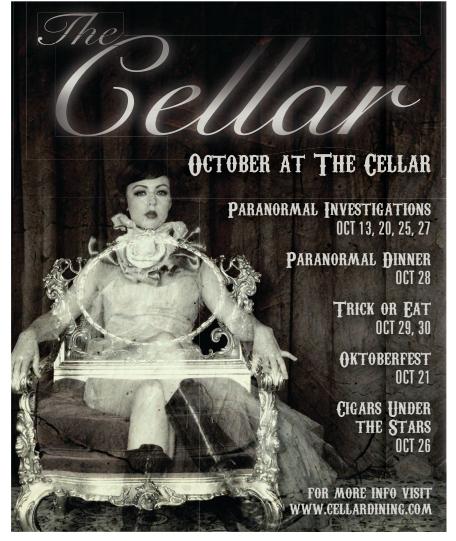
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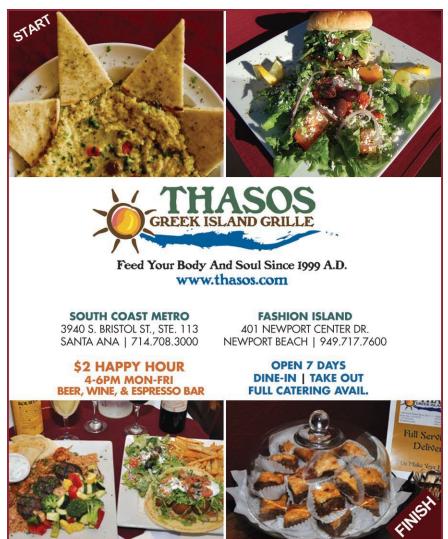
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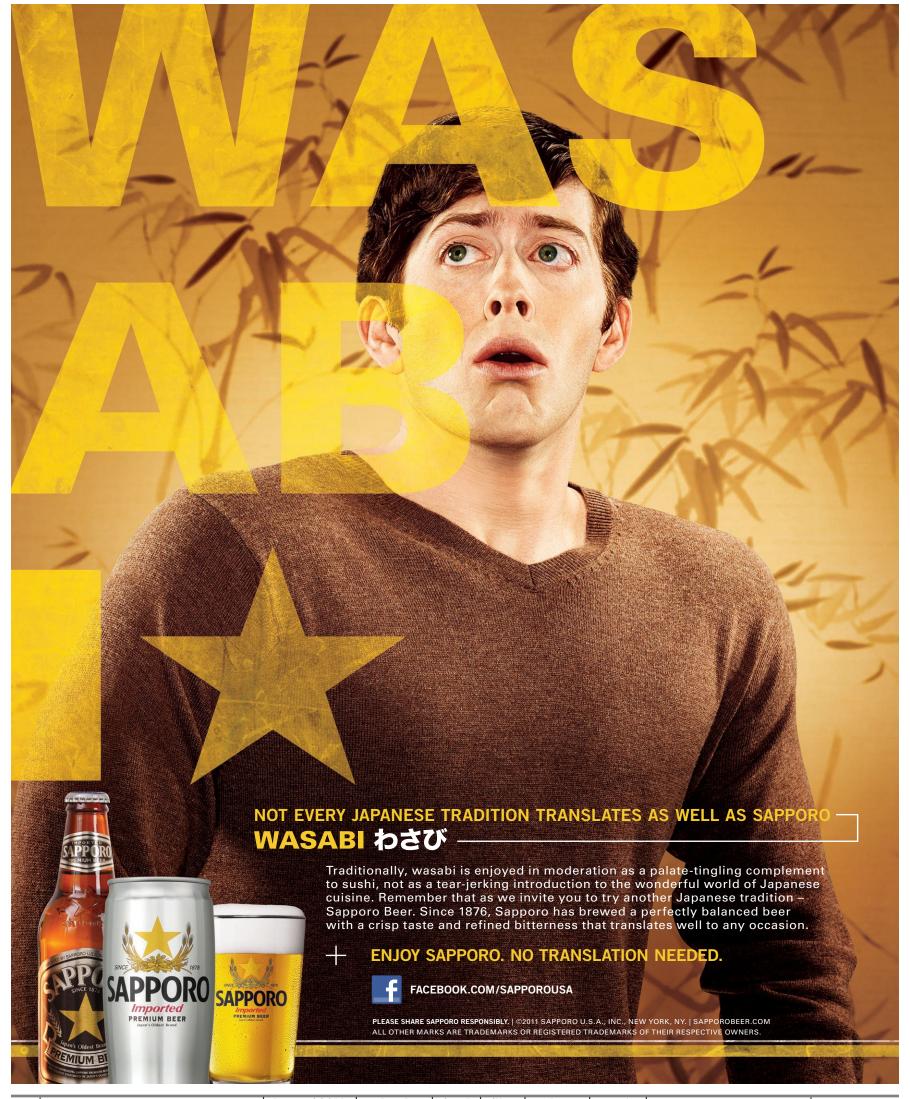
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There Will Always Be a Time to Dance

Footloose 2011 has the moves to bridge generations, and capture two demos

n hindsight, the 1984 hit Footloosestarring Kevin Bacon and directed by Herbert Ross-along with its contemporary Flashdance, can be seen as the link between the old Hollywood model of a let's-put-on-a-show musical, based on original songs brought to life in elaborate choreographed numbers, and the later Hollywood model of youth films, perfected in the '80s by John Hughes and terminally calcified over the decades to follow, in which a contemporary-pop soundtrack serves as both a structural backbone to the film itself and an ancillary product that can outgross and outlive the film that spawned it.

The 2011 Footloose—starring dancer Kenny Wormald in the Bacon role and directed by Craig Brewer of Hustle & Flow fame-is an extraordinarily faithful remake, recycling four songs from the first Footloose, plus plot, characters and iconography. (The main dude rocks skinny ties and drives Bacon's yellow Beetle, the former because it's in again and the latter as a nod to Brewer's wider project of rehabilitating old junk.) Like Ross' own old-meets-new appropriation, the 1981 meta-musical Pennies From Heaven. in which Steve Martin, Bernadette Peters and Christopher Walken danced and lip-synced to Depression Era-standards, Brewer's Footloose is an attempt to get at the heart of contemporary culture via slavish re-creation of an earlier time.

You know the story: A smart-aleck city teen named Ren (Wormald) moves to a tiny rural town where dancing has been banned, falls for the defiant daughter (Julianne Hough) of a local preacher/ city council member (Dennis Quaid), and, with the support of hayseed sidekick Willard (Miles Teller), ultimately pushes the town's moral needle by using Bible verses to recast his bumping and grinding as a holy act. Most jaw-droppingly, Brewer nearly shot-for-shot re-creates the centerpiece of Ross' film, the tour de force explosion of teen rage set in an empty warehouse, in which Ren fights back against his daily humiliations via gymnastic solo dance. (Key differences: Brewer sets the scene to the White Stripes, and Wormald, unlike Bacon, seems to have no need for a dance double.)

For all of his self-conscious copying of Ross' movie, Brewer does subtly adjust for the full generation gap between films. Some of these tweaks—a stray "the terrorists have won" joke, repeated references to "this recession"—might not stand the test of time. But others reveal a larger, smarter philosophy at work here. While hewing closely to Footloose's original story and themes, Brewer's film throws the standard high-school-movie notion of a teenage caste system out the window. Class, race, academic stratification, subcultural

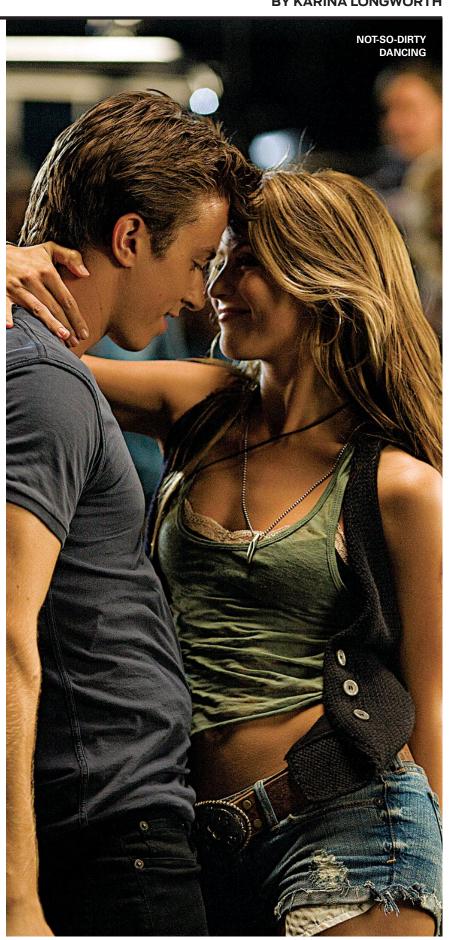
affiliation-all of the differences that usually keep kids to their own cliques or pit them against one another in teen films are treated here as meaningless. (Only the one pure villain can be categorized by movie type-he's vintage Redneck Dick.) This flat playing field might have an element of post-racial, multi-demo-courting fantasy to it, but it also feels accurate. The sheer diversity of music in the movie—Quiet Riot, Three 6 Mafia, Blake Shelton, Smashing Pumpkins—shows how Brewer gets that kids don't need to define/confine themselves to a specific "type" in a post-downloading, open-information era. Brewer seems to understand that youth culture. both as performed and as consumed, is no longer hierarchical in quite the same way that Hollywood has been portraying it since the '50s-that high school, like so much else on the planet, no longer operates according to the traditional power pyramid. For the first time in history, when someone says, "I like all kinds of music," they might actually mean it.

Brewer's reverence toward his source material and simultaneous awareness of the moment is also a great strategy for capturing two demos at once: young girls who never saw the original and their mothers, who will probably find it tough to resist Brewer's deliberate retracing of Ross' steps (including a faithful redo of the "Let's Hear It for the Boy" montage, in which Kevin Bacon taught Chris Penn how to dance). What Footloose seems to most want to be is a mother-daughter girls' night out, with Gen X moms crossing fingers in the hope their tween offspring will be receptive to the movie's lessons about dating studious, drug-free gymnasts over stoned, sleazy older dudes. (By any realworld parent's measure, "bad boy" Ren would actually be the best catch in town.)

Unfortunately, that wholesome messaging doesn't leave much room for what Brewer does best: namely, music-backed scenes that—through lurid lighting, slick camera whips and glides, and the sounds of breathing and grunting mixed just above the music-put the viewer inside a body in total abandon to a song. Nothing in Footloose comes close, in this respect, to the best moments of Brewer's previous, vibrant if uneven films Hustle & Flow and Black Snake Moan. But this heartfelt retread of a notably thin popcorn property does come alive during an illicit dance-off at a drive-in or when a line dance devolves into sweaty gyrations-basically, when the teenagers are fulfilling the grown-ups' worst fears.

FOOTLOOSE

was directed by Craig Brewer; written by Dean Pitchford and Brewer; and stars Kenny Wormald, Julianne Hough, Dennis Quaid and Miles Teller. Rated PG-13.





CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THEATERS AND SHOWTIMES

opening

FOOTLOOSE See "There Will Always Be Time to Dance," page 54.

ongoing

APOLLO 18 The Moon is made not of green cheese but sentient space rocks in Apollo 18, which purports to be an edited assembly of "real" declassified recordings from the covert titular 1974 lunar mission. Ostensibly tasked with installing Cold War anti-missile systems, three American astronauts instead discover that Russians-who seem to have made their own secret voyage to the same remote vicinity, and have now disappeared—are a far less urgent threat than extraterrestrial entities of a sneaky shape-shifting nature. Director Gonzalo López-Gallego's mock-verité aesthetics involve endlessly blurry, scratchy video (shot by a laughably implausible number of different cameras) and otherworldly howls that ineffectively strive to create suspense from half-glimpsed shadows and indecipherable screaming. His this-is-authentic conceit is by now a tediously corny device, and his story delivers no scares during the interminably long, uneventful build-up to its deflating climax. Nefarious government plots, nostalgic home movies, skeletal cosmonaut corpses, bodily infection, and creepy-crawly aliens all eventually factor into the droning action, which indulges in so much distractingly herkyjerky handheld cinematography that any sense of claustrophobic terror is impossible to maintain. It's a conspiracy theory-pandering film that merely reconfirms that most entries in the "found-footage" horror subgenre should

COLOMBIANA Though credited to one Olivier Megaton, the creative force

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ducer/co-screenwriter/ EuropaCorp mogul Luc Besson. More than any single person, Besson is responsible for popularizing what Colombiana embodies-weightless kinesis in international action filmmaking—and has produced a body of work filled with warrior women (La Femme Nikita, The Fifth Element). The latest long-stemmed action figure off the line is Cataleya (Zoe Saldana), introduced as a child eluding assassins in a headlong rush down the hilly districts of Bogota in a standout set piece. The bulk of the film, however, takes place in the U.S., where Cataleya has trained as an assassin under her uncle (Cliff Curtis), grown to fill out an Irma Vep catsuit, and is leaving a trail of badguy corpses as a beacon and warning sign to her parents' murderers. The action is recorded in the EuropaCorp house style of iittery monotony, never resorting to one camera setup when ten might suffice. The script has been approached as a great vessel to tumble clichés into: snide CIA men: FBI procedural filler; "Never forget where you came from"; "You must expect the unexpected." No, don't. Possibly worth seeing if you are 13, as the hot Rihanna looking chick shows sideboob. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. AMC 30 at the Block, Orange; Edwards Long Beach Stadium

16 & IMAX, Long Beach. **CONTAGION** Contagion opens on day two of a global viral epidemic. Gwyneth Paltrow plays Beth, an American employee for a multinational corporation who returns from a business trip to her wintry Midwestern home feeling like crap. Twenty-four hours after she's written off her sickness as jet lag in a phone call to her lover, Beth starts foaming at the mouth. She's pronounced dead at the hospital, and before her husband, Mitch (Matt Damon), can break the news to their young son, the kid follows suit. Beth is fingered

unseen on earth, which defies cure, containment, or scientific understanding. Streets fill with the zombie sick, and the social order breaks down. Director Steven Soderbergh deploys a cast of thousands to help sketch the epidemic as a global, class-blind, all-encompassing event. Marion Cotillard is the WHO epidemiologist assigned to trace the origins of Beth's illness. Laurence Fishburne is the CDC chief trying to manage the message—a fight thwarted when blogger Jude Law posts a video of a Japanese businessman collapsing on a city bus. Crafting staccato montages to a coolly insistent score, Soderbergh transitions between stories at a rapid-fire pace, allowing a couple of seemingly major characters to disappear for long stretches, and one to die with a startling lack of sentimentality. Contagion is a pulp-pop confection with an unusually serious social critique at its heart, tracing the chain reaction caused by isolated acts of selfishness, unchecked power, and a never-sated culture of newer, faster, better. (PG-13)

Karina Longworth. Countywide. CRAZY, STUPID, LOVE After Emily (Julianne Moore) tells Cal (Steve Carell), her husband of 20-plus years, that she wants a divorce, she confesses she may be having a midlife crisis. "Can women even have midlife crises? In the movies, it's always men." In this movie, too. Yet another Hollywood romantic comedy to play up its awareness of genre cliché in a narrative that validates far more of those clichés than it deflates, Crazy, Stupid, Love makes the mistake of suggesting a path untrod, only to deliver a scramble of the familiar. Directors Glenn Ficarra and John Requa were last seen as the auteurs of I Love You Phillip Morris, one of the smartest comedies of recent years and quite possibly the best gay relationship film ever made featuring Hollywood stars. Crazy, Stupid, Love isn't nearly as groundbreaking, but its love-positive dramedy is notably bighearted, and enlivened by the work of a few good actors. Moore pops up mostly as a foil to Cal's effort to Regain His Manhood via new clothes and anonymous sex. He's tutored by Jacob (Ryan Gosling), a player who Changes His Ways when he falls for stunning law student Hannah (Emma Stone). Carell

and Gosling have a nicely barbed chemistry together, particularly in the scene in which they establish their pupilmentor relationship, using gangster-film lingo to cement a bond whose first destination is necessarily a shopping montage. That's the thing about movie clichés: As eager as filmmakers seem to be to show that they know the jig is up, sometimes that shit just works. (PG-13) Karina Longworth. Countywide.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK

Die-hard horror fans (including this one) generally spend their adult lives hoping to re-experience the fear and awe they derived from the scary flicks they saw as kids. Which may be why Pan's Labyrinth director Guillermo del Toro was inspired to co-produce and write (with Matthew Robbins) a remake of the legendarily creepy 1973 TV-movie Don't Be Afraid of the Dark, which del Toro reportedly saw at age nine (and this reviewer at 10). In this visually lush updating, directed by newcomer Troy Nixey, 9-year-old Sally (Bailee Madison) is sent by her mother to live with her architect father (Guy Pearce) and his interior decorator girlfriend (Katie Holmes) in an old Rhode Island mansion they're restoring. In a flash, Sally is compelled by whispery voices to open up a firmly bolted fireplace ash pit—big mistake—thereby setting free small, demonic creatures that feed on the teeth of dead children, a trait that is a nicely nasty new touch. (The TV-movie was vague about their motivations, beyond ordinary demon meanness.) Just because they can, the creatures begin taunting and frightening Sally, who puts up a good fight. If the grand finale isn't as resonantly scary as the original, maybe that's just because, try though we might, we're no longer impressionable kids. (R) Chuck Wilson. AMC Fullerton 20, Fullerton.

DRIVE As stripped down and propulsive as its robotic title. Drive is the most "American" movie yet by Danish genre director Nicolas Winding Refn. The film is a sleek, tense piece of work that, as a vehicle for Ryan Gosling, has a kind of daredevil control, swerving the actor dangerously close to and abruptly away from self-parody. The plot could nearly be inscribed on the head of a pin: A chivalrous loner—Gosling's Hollywood stunt driver/wheelman—participates in an armed robbery to help out the woman he loves; the deal turns out to be a setup, and the body count explodes. Drive is nominally set in the present day, but the 40-year-old director elects to emphasize the retro-synthesizing Miami Vice's languid dissolves and neon-limned dive bars. Blade Runner's nocturnal skylines and Top Gun's MTV-friendly lyrical montage interludes. Refn's most obvious break with the airbrushed '80s and clearest link to his own early films is the ultraviolent, even gruesome, splatter that comes once Gosling's near-catatonic driver agrees to the heist. It's one of Drive's jokes that, over the course of the movie, Gosling's spiffy silver jacket will be increasingly bloodstained. The Gosling character is not only a master of high-speed bumper cars but, when riled, also a near-lunatic killer who, as up close and personal as the protagonist of Refn's Bronson, uses a hammer, some steel-tipped footwear and his bare hands to take care of business. (R) J Hoberman. Countywide.

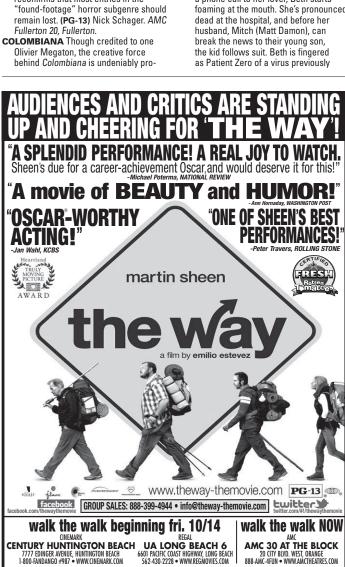
50/50 One scene captures the tricky tonal balance of cancer comedy 50/50. Adam, the straightedge radio producer played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt, has just finished his first round of chemo. It was tough, but the kindly gents IV'd next to him made it easier by sharing their pot brownies. As the Bee Gees play on the soundtrack, Adam wanders through the oncology ward in a haze and giggles at

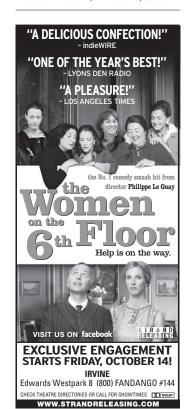
the sad-looking patients, harried nurses, and shrouded corpses as they float by. It's complicated making a movie like 50/50, which was written by Will Reiser based on his own early-twenties experience with a tumor on his spine. That scene, and the whole film really, intermingles anonymous tragedy with blunt comedy, but uneasily—in a way that suggests that though it's OK to laugh, we shouldn't exactly feel good about it. Although often quite funny, 50/50 is more often anary; indeed, the most welcome transformation Adam makes isn't from sick to well but from milquetoast to asshole. Once a DON'T WALK-obeying welcome mat, Adam dumps his duplicitous girlfriend (Bryce Dallas Howard), pushes away his overbearing mother (Anjelica Huston), and offers his therapist (Anna Kendrick) some bracing sarcasm. The movie's only constant is Adam's good pal Kyle (Reiser's good pal Seth Rogen), who sticks with him through head-shaving, surgery, and despair. He reads cancer books on the john! He is a Good Person! And this is what makes 50/50 not only a cancer movie but also a Seth Rogen movie. Bros before hos before neurofibroma sarcoma schwannomas. (R) Dan Kois. Countywide. THE HELP A fast-talking, eye-rolling

snarler, Emma Stone wears a truly terrible perm to play the allegedly dowdy Skeeter, a recent college graduate who returns to her family's Mississippi plantation in the summer of 1962 in The . Help. In her absence, not only have her school friends become the casually, cruelly racist white establishment. but also her own beloved childhood maid (Cicely Tyson) has disappeared. Skeeter decides to write about her hometown from the perspective of the black women who work in every white household. Her ins to that world are dutiful maid Aibileen (Viola Davis) and Minny (Octavia Spencer), whose inability to become wallnaper/doormat while at work has cost her a few jobs, most recently and spectacularly in the home of the town's coolly despicable queen bee, Hilly (Bryce Dallas Howard). To accuse The Help, based on Kathryn Stockett's bestselling novel, of pushing the dreaded Magical Negro button would be a low blow. These women do actually say things like "Fried chicken just tend to make you feel better 'bout . life," while pretty blonde women look on, beaming—but they're also victims of fairly realistic character flaws, almost as much as they're victims of circumstance. The Help is plainly a film about how talking becomes writing, which becomes activism, which turns into history. The night Medgar Evers is killed, Aibileen tries to comfort a paranoid Minny: "We ain't doin' civil rights, we just telling stories like they really happened"—a downplaying that right-fully makes her friend laugh. (**PG-13**) Karina Longworth. Countywide.

I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE DOES IT

What I don't know: why these movies keep getting made. I Don't Know How She Does It is based on Allison Pearson's 2002 comic bestseller and directed by Douglas McGrath. But its real auteur is screenwriter Aline Brosh McKenna, scripter of wan workplace romantic comedies such as The Devil Wears Prada and Morning Glory. Kate Reddy (Sarah Jessica Parker), the protagonist of I Don't Know How She Does It, must balance even more than the heroines of those two earlier films: a career in hedge fund managing, a spouse, and two young kids. In both her home and work life, Kate constantly anticipates needs and strives never to disappoint, impossible expectations that she tries to meet with ever detailed logistics—planning that becomes even more complicated when her job demands that she travel to New York







frequently to work on a project with a colleague there, Jack (Pierce Brosnan). How does Kate do it? She is strong, she is invincible, she apologizes a lot, though every time she's quickly forgiven, notably by spouse Richard (Greg Kinnear). In a significant departure from Pearson's book, Kate doesn't have to make any real compromises to fulfill her husband's and children's needs and her own commitment to a job she loves. It's not the place of I Don't Know, a mass-market diversion, to proffer real solutions to intractable problems. But wouldn't the film serve its intended audience-moms who do it all-better with more messiness and less fantasy? (PG-13) Melissa Anderson. Edwards Tustin Market Place 6, Tustin; Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20 & IMAX, Aliso Viejo.

THE IDES OF MARCH George Clooney's fourth directorial effort—scripted by Clooney, his longtime partner Grant Heslov, and Beau Willimon—is a loose adaptation of Farragut North, a 2008 behind-the-political-campaign play by Willimon, who once worked for Chuck Schumer, Hillary Clinton, and Howard Dean. In the play, the Democratic presidential candidate was spoken of but never appeared on stage. In the film, he's played by Clooney and is an active, necessary participant in intrigue involving 30-year-old campaign advisor Stephen Myers (Ryan Gosling), his mentor (Philip Seymour Hoffman), a competing candidate's top aid (Paul Giamatti) and a tempestuous, barely legal sexpot intern (Evan Rachel Wood). Ides of March is unmistakably a tale of romantic coming of age. A genuine idealist when we meet him, happily, guilelessly evangelizing candidate Mike Morris' "Kool-Aid," Stephen's arc is over when his heart has fully hardened. Here, as in last month's Drive, Gosling's blankness contains multitudes. Compelling enough as a methodic moral inquiry, a sten-by-sten accounting of how lines in the sand move, Ides is less successful when attempting to capture the feeling of the times. Transparently haunted by the crash of Obamamania (the takeaway image is of a dead-eved Gosling surrounded by Clooney's face on Faireyesque screen prints selling the slogan "Believe"), Ides is too melancholic to mount an actual political argument—it's more like public wound-licking. Any nod to our real of-the-moment disillusionment dissolves into soapy plot contortions, with a sex scandal begetting backstabbing and blackmail, necessitating secret rendezvous in darkened stairwells and the kitchens of closed restaurants. (R) Karina Longworth.

Countywide KILLER ELITE Wholly unrelated to the 1975 Sam Peckinpah film of the same name, Killer Elite is distinguished by one no-mercy, eye-gouging, testicle-punching brawl, and one whoppingly indifferent screenplay. After a collateral-damage close call awakens his conscience—the first of many perfunctorily recycled bits to come—hitman Danny Bryce (Jason Statham) retires only to be drawn back into business when his ex-partner (Robert De Niro) is kidnapped by a sheikh. To ransom his friend, Danny has to kill members of the British SAS Special Forces who offed the sheikh's sons during the Dhofar Rebellion. As Danny tallies his kills, he's tailed by SAS vet Spike (Clive Owen); both are duty-bound warriors, wellmatched to pummel each another in crisp and brutal dustups that make good use of Statham's human-bowling-ball physicality. Rather than these mencode-following samurai—the villains of Killer Elite are the corrupt boardroom shot-callers who pit them against one another, suits who say things like "We don't want blood on our pinstripes." Or is the real villain screenwriter Matt

Sherring, also responsible for "Killing is easy—living with it's the hard part, and "Shit happens when you play in the deep end of the pool"? (R) Nick Pinkerton. Countywide.

MONEYBALL Michael Lewis' book Moneyball was published in 2003, in the immediate wake of The Season That Shook Baseball. The story didn't look like much on the surface: Billy Beane, a former ballplayer-turned-scout-turned-GM, and Paul DePodesta, an Ivy League wonk, took the Oakland Athletics' measly \$39 million salary budget, crunched the numbers, and turned overlooked, undervalued statistics into overachieving, undervalued ballplayers. The book would serve as a Bible for every baseball executive and stats-obsessed fan, and it turns out that adapting it for the cineplex was fairly straightforward after all: Like every other sports movie ever, it's the story of The Little Team That Could. Lewis' account is simply inspiration; director Bennett Miller (Capote) and writers Aaron Sorkin and Steve Zaillian barely touch upon sabermetrics and the influential work of statistician Bill James. The filmmakers wisely boil down Beane and DePodesta's complex formulas to a single, simple thesis: Sign ballplayers who get on base more than anyone else. Then they hand over the movie to Brad Pitt as Beane, a former firstround draft pick by the New York Mets exorcising his dashed-dream demons one trade, thrown chair, and turned-over watercooler at a time. Play ball. (PG-13) Robert Wilonsky. Countywide.

SARAH'S KEY Exposing a little-known

piece of Holocaust history—the Vel'

d'Hiv roundup, in which French police arrested thousands of Jews in Paris in July 1942—Sarah's Key dutifully follows the template of scores of movies about the Shoah: wringing from atrocity the most unseemly sentimentality. The film toggles between the past—as 10-vear-old Sarah Starzynski (Melusine Mayance) and her parents are taken from their Marais home and penned up in the Velodrome d'Hiver, a cycling arena in the 15th Arrondissement. before being sent to a nearby internment camp—and the present, focusing on Julia (Kristin Scott Thomas), an American journalist in Paris who's writing an article about the all-but-buried episode. In the course of her research, Julia discovers some uncomfortable truths about her French in-laws' connection with the Starzynski family; wading through the mawkish muck. particularly during plot threads involving her "miraculous" middle-age pregnancy and tracking down Sarah's adult son, the bilingual and normally unimpeachable Scott Thomas sounds as if she has learned a Yank accent via Rosetta Stone. Based on Tatiana de Rosnay's novel and co-written by director Gilles Paguet-Brenner and Serge Joncour. Sarah's Key is filled with the usual meaningless bromides, concluding with Scott Thomas' voiceover declaration: 'When a story is told, it is not forgotten." This film vanishes from memory immediately. (PG-13) Melissa Anderson. Edwards Westpark 8, Irvine.
SEVEN DAYS IN UTOPIA A fantasy

about a temperamental, wand-wielding young man named Luke and the aphorism-uttering master who leads him to enlightenment, Seven Days in Utopia transposes Jedi mythology to the manicured greens of competitive golf. But unlike the Excalibur-on-the-baseballdiamond antics of The Natural, Matt Russell's modern myth trades out hero worship for a hero who worships. After an epic meltdown on the 18th hole of his professional debut, handsome hotshot Luke Chisholm (Lucas Black) swerves his sedan onto the Texas farm of one Johnny Crawford (Robert Duvall), a wizened old Yoda who just happens to be

a retired golf pro. With his car wrecked just enough, and a wholesome redhead making eyes at him from across the havstacks. Luke agrees to stick around for a week of eccentric private lessons and golf metaphors. For a time, the film shoulders its hokum rather well, with Black strutting convincingly and Duvall's mouthy mugging mostly in check. But all those shots of heavenly shafts of light eventually climax in unabashed Christian conversion, with our Golf Whisperer bequeathing Luke a Bible as a power-pop song exults, it feels like I'm born again. "See it, feel it, trust it," Johnny teaches. "Don't think." God forbid. (G) Eric Hynes. Century Stadium 25 and XD, Orange.

THE SMURFS Raja Gosnell recycles his Scooby-Doo films' CG-live-action hijinks and juvenile postmodern jokiness for The Smurfs, in which Papa Smurf (Jonathan Winters), Smurfette (Katy Perry), and their magical blue-skinned compatriots are inadvertently transported to Manhattan, with bulbousnosed sorcerer Gargamel (Hank Azaria) and his pet cat Azrael in hot pursuit. This Enchanted-style fish-out-of-water scenario is mined for interminable product placement gags (Blue Man Group!) and dreary fantasy-meets-modernity scenarios (Gargamel gets Tasered by the NYPD!). It's done via a dim script that inundates conversations with the term smurf as a noun, adjective, and adverb, and then wink-wink addresses the silliness of the iconic characters' speech, and their personality-based names and signature "la la la-la la la" song. Gosnell directs as if every scene must be either a nauseating rollercoaster ride or a syrupy melodrama, resulting in a seesawing tone that's not stabilized by the presence of Neil Patrick Harris as a cosmetics company executive and expectant father forced to baby-sit the cheery computer-generated creatures. Amid loving hugs and embarrassing Guitar Hero performances with his new munchkin friends, Harris learns from Papa the value of family and parenthood. More than that mushiness, though, it's the possibility of this frantic film spawning sequels that truly inspires thoughts of smurficide. (PG) Nick Schager. Countywide.

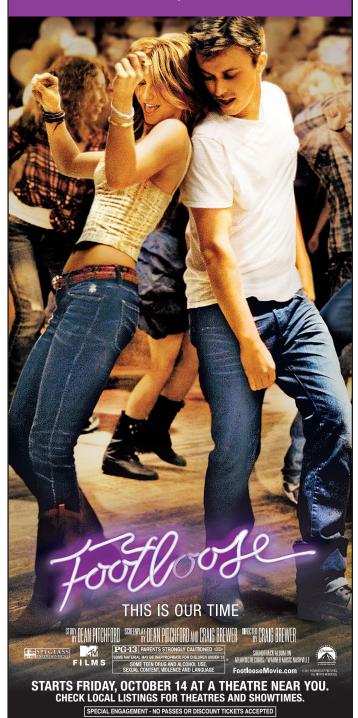
WARRIOR You know those Affliction shirts, covered in skulls, gothic lettering, and tribal patterns, all cacophonous symbols of badass machismo? That's what the Mixed Martial Arts tie-in movie Warrior is-an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink firesale of male-weepie tropes, awesome in its thoroughness. The collective dream of authentic blue-collar American grubbiness lives on in a Pittsburgh row house, where long-estranged son Tommy (Tom Hardy), just back from a tour with the marines, visits his recovering alcoholic dad Paddy Conlon (Nick Nolte). Tommy can't forgive the old man for breaking up the family, but needs a trainer for his nascent MMA career. In Philadelphia, Tommy's older brother, Brendon (Joel Edgerton), a physics teacher and family man who has likewise broken ties with his past, gets back in the fighter's octagon to keep the bank from repossessing his house. The announcement of a tournament-style championship contest sets the brothers on a collision course to a family reunion in the cage. Old line-gargler Nolte remains an effortlessly moving presence, while Hardy and Edgerton embody their archetypes and handle the physical demands. With a silverback strut and the neck of a '30s-mural prole, Hardy does Method brooding, while Edgerton underplays with integrity in a film that spends its last hour piling climax on top of climax, holding the audience in an emotional arm bar. (PG-13) Nick Pinkerton. Countywide.

WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER? Freaked by

a faux-scientific scare article in Marie Claire (how's that for product placement?) claiming that women who burn through "too many" sexual partners never get married, goofball singleton Ally (Anna Faris) concludes that, rather than add to her "number" looking for Mr. Right, she's better off tracking down the 20 dudes she's already slept with to try to finagle a happily-everafter with whichever one'll have her. Colin (Chris Evans), the fuck-machine bachelor who lives across the hall. knows how to use Facebook, so he aids Ally's chase. Cue bicker-flirting over beer and pizza, strip basketball and a perfectly chaste sleepover—a utopia wrecked when Ally attempts to appease her judgey mom and soonto-be-married sis by reuniting with her moneybags high school sweetheart. Pushed back from an April release date.

What's Your Number unavoidably plays like a mash-up of the recent romantic comedies that it should have beat to market. Like Bridesmaids, it's a raunchy romp about a smart, pretty girl with a secret creative talent playing second banana in the lead up to a loved one's wedding, like Friends With Benefits. it's a self-congratulatory self-aware riff on best friends making the best mates. Unfortunate coincidences of timing, maybe, but what about the shameless retreading of late-20th-century cool-kids rom-coms (High Fidelity, Reality Bites)? Still, even if the speechifying is cringingly trite, and even though it's evident from Colin's first frame onscreen that 21 will be Ally's lucky number, at least her roundelay through exes allows for a few scant moments of inspired lunacy, led by Faris' cartoon-perfect vocal talents. (R) Karina Longworth. Countywide.

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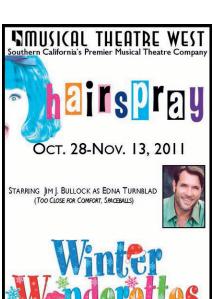
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This Dude Doesn't Abide

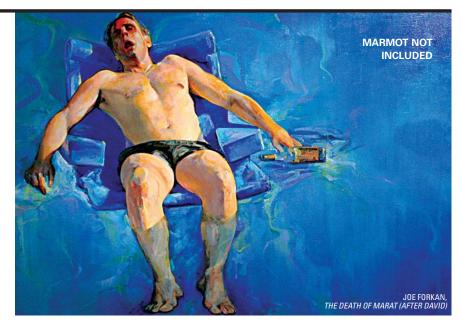
'The Lebowski Cycle' presents pastiches of classical paintings and the Coen Brothers' classic film, to uneven results

BY DAVE BARTON

he culty goodness of the Coen Brothers' 1998 film, The Big Lebowski, escapes me. A comic ode to Raymond Chandler's The Big Sleep, with its femme fatales, wheelchair-bound rich guys and convoluted plot twists that are never completely resolved, the cast is uniformly good (especially John Goodman's loose-cannon Vietnam vet), the dialogue laugh-out-loud witty, and there are several unique set pieces. The narrative rambles and sputters, however, and the characters seem more like a handful of quirks than people with motivations, the half-baked attempt at Zen-like, reeking of pot smoke . . . I can only assume that is the main reason for its popularity.

If, however, you love the movie, visit artist Joe Forkan's "The Lebowski Cycle" at the Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, and you'll be treated to an entire gallery of oil paintings inspired by the film. Forkan captured still images from it, all of them easily identifiable (even if you haven't seen the movie for many years), and then painted the scenes on large linen or wood canvases. Walter, the Dude and Donny drinking and arguing at the bowling alley; the Dude's fantasy with Maude Lebowski dressed as a Valkyrie and the Busby Berkeley-esque chorus girls wearing bowling-pin headdresses; Maude, after sex, lying under the sheets, hugging her legs to her chest, trying to conceive; Jesus the pervert standing in a bowling alley in his purple jumpsuit; Walter and the Dude hugging on the beach near a coffee can of Donny's ashes; Uli the Nihilist lying on an inflatable raft in a pool, an empty bottle of booze floating nearby.

What elevates this from an exhibition of movie-geek fan art—besides the fact that Forkan's technique is very, very



solid—is the artist's naming of his work after other, more famous paintings. Aided by curator Andrea Harris-McGee's posted images of the namesake works by Caravaggio, David, Manet, etc. next to Forkan's work, we're asked to compare and contrast the dueling narratives of the two images. How are they the same? How are they different? How do they comment on each other? Do they?

As an intellectual exercise, you can free-associate a myriad connections between just about anything—whether the connection really belongs there or not—and therein lies the problem. Forkan has isolated moments from a film narrative that isn't really much of a narrative, gathered together classic works that have only the slimmest of connections to his

work, and then spends the rest of the time shoe-horning the concept to make it work. Like a glass slipper on the foot of the ugly stepsister, it's an awkward fit.

Take, for example, the aforementioned image of Uli in the pool; it is titled *The Death of Marat (after David)*, inspired by *Death of Marat* by French painter (and propagandist) Jacques-Louis David's painting of the infamous French Revolutionary assassinated in his bathtub. While both pictures involve murderous ideologues, bad philosophy and some water, the cleverness of those similarities subsides quickly because there's nothing beyond that. Forkan's Maude in bed is titled *Venus* and hustled together with images of Manet's painting of a prostitute, *Olympia* (which in turn was inspired by

Titian's *Venus of Urbino*). Maude and Olympia are both strong, take-no-prisoners women, but since Maude is fully covered and isn't a prostitute, I'm not seeing the connection, unless, like Manet to his predecessor, Forkan is just flipping his artistic forebears a wry finger.

Even if we go with the idea that Forkan is suggesting Maude's a goddess—Maude as Venus or as a Valkyrie in the colossally awesome *The Raft of the Medusa (after Géricault)*—that still doesn't work when placed next to Géricault's original painting of shipwreck and class struggle. Factor in that a number of the classic paintings are religious in nature—*The Agony In the Garden, Ecce Homo, Deposition From the Cross, The Taking of Christ*—that a pothead slacker getting his ass handed to him by hippie-hating Malibu cops seems kind of facile in comparison, even if you don't buy into all that religious mythology.

In the end, the one painting that really had a voice of its own was Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog (after Friedrich). In it, the whited-out figure of the Dude stands in a parking lot, gazing out at a gray sea of rusted, wrecked cars, looking for his junker. It's the only picture in the exhibition that isn't a still from the film and involves the artist appropriating the image, and then working his artistic vision on it, making it something completely different. Harris-McGee told me it was the most autobiographical of the artist's paintings, and its inspiration-Friedrich's well-tailored man staring out at craggy, treacherous mountain peaks bathed in fog-suggests the possible terrors ahead and the decisive moment we take to press on through adversity. If there were more of that kind of work present in "The Lebowski Cycle," maybe then I would also believe that the Dude does, indeed, abide.

"THE LEBOWSKI CYCLE"

at Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion at Orange Coast College, 2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa, (714) 432-5072; occartpavilion. blogspot.com. Open Tues.-Fri., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Wed., 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Through Oct.28. Free.

TRENDZILLA »VICKIE CHANG

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A fter a tiny bit of convincing, Rocom finally reveals to me that he lives in Mission Viejo. "Aaaaaahhhh, I have a bit of an issue with my secret identity," he admits.

Artist/rapper/producer Rocom might be unwilling to fill me in on his age, his place of employment (art director for an "international toy company") and city of residence, but he's

no stranger to the burgeoning arts and culture circles in Orange County. He was born in Los Angeles and raised in Orange County from the age of 7; he eventually attended UC Irvine, majoring in computer engineering with a minor in digital arts.

"It's a funny place," he says of UCI, when asked what he thought of his college experience. "Most people who go to UCI didn't have UCI as their first-choice school. It's a campus of really smart people who didn't want to be there, but they didn't mind being there either. UCI introduced me to college radio, Cha for Tea and some of the best friends I could ask for." But while he's received admiration for his music online—nominated in these very pages for a Best of Readers' Poll award—it's his print of a suicidal Darth Vader that's gaining him some notoriety with whom it really counts with on the Internet: The nerds.

The "Suicidal Sith" limited-edition print



(\$30) riffs on the aesthetic of a playing card: A mirrored Darth with a lightsaber through his head. His suit? A broken heart, of course.

Rocom unveiled his Etsy storefront in April 2010 to sell pop-culture-driven works. "I figured if I wanted to be in a gallery, why not one that is open to the entire world via the Internet?" he asks. "I made a name for myself in the music scene with the Internet, so I wanted to keep my visual art in the same

good hands. Also, [Etsy] is a great community, and it takes PayPal. I like PayPal."

Jawas ("Utinni 4 Life," three identical closeups of the Tatooine natives in acrylic on 4-inchby-4-inch canvases), PlayStation controller symbols and the evolution of Batman symbols are all common subjects of Rocom's art.

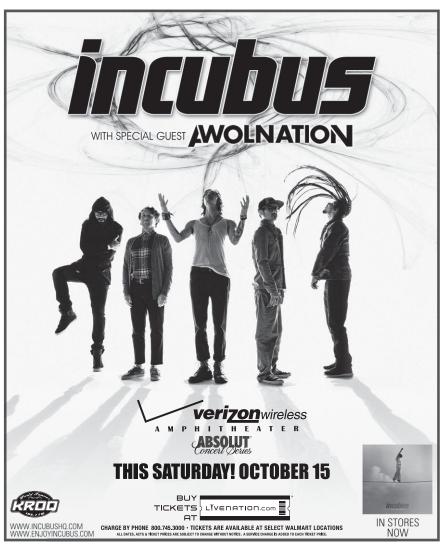
"I'm a major collector, as most pop-culture fiends are. I wanted to create art that represented all of the things I collected in my life—games, toys, comic books, etc.," he says. "My paintings represent a modern version of things I loved collecting as a kid. It's also a cool way to show you're a total nerd without having a life-sized Stormtrooper in your hallway."

VCHANG@OCWEEKLY.COM

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Ten Years of Detroit Bar

How the Costa Mesa venue became Orange County's arbiter of cool

BY TAYLOR HAMBY

he paint on the walls was still wet when Detroit Bar opened in October 2001. The crew was still bringing in barstools as Stereolab conducted a sound check. Yet despite the skin-of-their-teeth stress, co-owner Dan Bradley cites opening night as one of his fondest memories of the place. "To start a venue with that particular band was a godsend," he says. "It set us on the map, essentially. It spread the word out that we would be booking that quality of music."

Just a month prior, Detroit Bar was Club Mesa, a rough-and-tumble punkrock venue in westside Costa Mesa. The Memphis Group, made up of the owners of Memphis restaurant, wanted to expand its musical reach, but the small space at Memphis inhibited booking larger acts. The group purchased Club Mesa in summer 2001, with Bradley's friends Scott Hamilton, Jason Husted and Chris Fahey playing integral roles in starting and running the project.

"They were buying it, and they really didn't know the music scene and had never owned a bar before," Fahey recalls of the Memphis Group men, "but we all gathered together, and they said [to me], 'Hey, you're a lot better at doing this."

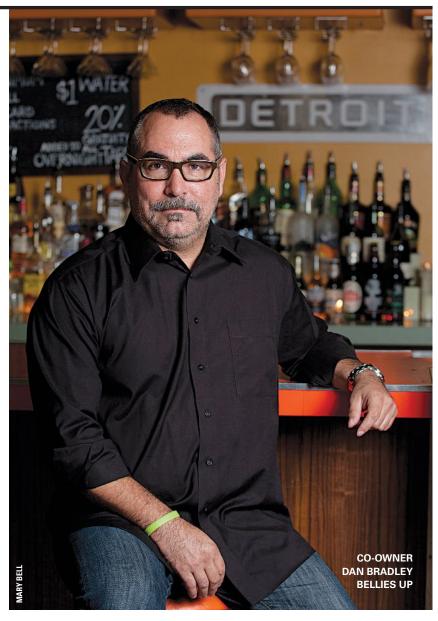
Fahey had booked shows locally since he was 17 and served as the original talent buyer at Detroit Bar. "We cut down on the complete A-hole, punk-rock vibe and started slowly changing things."

The Memphis Group set out to develop the quality of the nightlife and live-music scene in the area, as well as provide a unique destination for bands from elsewhere. "Detroit Bar is really the heart and soul of live music in Orange County," says DJ Scotty Coats, a regular performer at the bar for the past decade. "Ten years ago, most bands would skip over OC, but not now." Notable bands who have rolled into the venue include Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Modest Mouse and Cat Power.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. Jr. (coincidentally from Detroit, Michigan) played there on both of their recent tours. "What's funny is it's unassuming," singer Danny Zott says. "It's in a strip mall, and you wouldn't think it would be that special. Then you walk in, and it's like *The Wizard of Oz.* You're in black-and-white, then you walk in, and it's in color."

Local acts Cold War Kids, Foster the People and the Growlers all got their start with Monday Night Residencies, which Fahey instituted. And Young the Giant, who performed at the VMAs this year, said playing at Detroit was a "make it" point in their career.

Bradley credits Fahey for the bar's cachet. "[Fahey is] solely responsible for getting us high-profile booking," he says. Fahey left Detroit Bar in 2008, after



the bar's rent went up more than 130 percent and his son was born. "It kind of worked out that they couldn't afford to keep me on, and I couldn't afford to do something that pulled me away from my son," he says. Now the manager of bands such as the Bird and the Bee, Omaha, and James Fletcher, Fahey also does production work for the Coachella Music and Arts Festival.

With his departure, Jon Reiser, a former investor and partner, became the talent buyer from 2009 to 2010. Reiser, who left Detroit Bar in June and is now attempting to revamp the Galaxy Concert Theatre in Santa Ana, declined to comment for this story.

In addition to growing the talent at Detroit Bar, the group also gives back. In 2005, a comedy night featuring David Cross and Patton Oswalt raised \$12,000 for the victims of the Indonesian tsunami. And since longtime general manager Husted was diagnosed with lymphoma, the Memphis Group has hosted multiple benefits to help him and his family.

"There's that community vibe. It's like, 'So-and-so's sick? Shit, let's throw a night for them,'" Fahey says.

Bradley attributes the recent uptick in business to the bar's current team, which includes talent buyer Jeffery Shuman. Positive word-of-mouth via artists, agencies and local fans, he says, keeps them going.

The Memphis Group just signed a longterm lease and plans to make significant interior updates. "Our core, our vision and sensibilities are definitely intact," Bradley says. "It's in our DNA. We're looking forward to another 10 years."

TAHAMBY@OCWEEKLY.COM

DETROIT BAR 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0600; detroitbar.com.

MENTAL NOTES

>> RYAN WEYLS

Duff McKagan Wrote a Great Book

Rock bios have been increasing in number lately, but few are as enjoyable as founding Guns N' Roses bassist Duff McKagan's memoir, It's So Easy . . . and Other Lies. While Duff is candid about his addictions and the collapse of the classic Guns N' Roses lineup. he eschews the easy tabloid approach and aims instead for the big picture, giving as much attention to his early life in Seattle and more recent events such as his 1999 marriage, his enrollment at the University of Seattle's business school and his training in martial arts. The details of Duff's eventual physical and spiritual rebound make for an intense and satisfying read. As in his book, McKagan is a grateful, personable guy whom you've seemingly known your entire life.

OC Weekly: A lot of your early drug and alcohol use was to manage panic attacks. Do you want the book to reach out to people going through the same thing?

Duff McKagan: After I had my relapse with Xanax and began writing for [*OC Weekly*'s sister paper] *Seattle Weekly*, I found that I could get across my intentions or thoughts better in writing. I was writing these side pieces that were private, and I wasn't sure what they were going to be for. I realized that if a guy like me, a normal guy, can get through extraordinary circumstances, fuck it, anyone can. So if one person finds something that turns around their life [in my book], that would be awesome.

What was it like to go from being in Guns N' Roses for more than a decade to then finding yourself a freshman in college, learning how to use Microsoft Excel?

[Laughs] I didn't really have that sense of entitlement. I think college will do that for you, and martial arts will [also] bring you back into the real world. I had a GED, so I didn't have full high-school transcripts. I just thought I could go to Seattle U and enter, write them a check. It was from that dumb-assed move that I started getting chopped down. They said, "Mr. McKagan, where are your transcripts?" I don't know, somewhere. "Well, you've got to find those and write us an entrance essay." I did all that. "Well, that's a good story, but your grades can't get you into Seattle U. What you can do is go to community college, take a full load of courses, get A's and come back." That chops you right down from any high station you might think you're at. So finally ending up at Seattle U with those really smart kids, it was just too much work for me to even think like that. I just really wanted to go to college. It was as fun for me go to college as it was playing some of the best gigs we ever played. Some people might read this and say, "What the fuck is he talking about?" But for me, it was brand-new. I was thirsty for knowledge, and I was in the best place I knew of to get that knowledge. From an Oct. 5 Heard Mentality blog post.

BLOG ON >> MUSIC HEARD MENTALITY

This column was compiled from Heard Mentality blog posts. For more news & daily updates, visit:

BLOGS.OCWEEKLY.COM/HEARDMENTALITY







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music



Battles, Scarred

After losing a member, the neo-math rock trio are stronger than ever BY LILLEDESHAN BOSE

hen Battles came out with Mirrored in 2007, they blew critics away with the manmachine-like precision of their music, a prog-meets-metal-meets-electro-meets-jazz-meets-funk soundscape that melded analog precision with a digital sound. Watching the band live was beautiful—you didn't know what sounds were produced mechanically and what was a product of blood and sweat. And their technical proficiency didn't get in the way of fun: Their songs were still as catchy and danceable as any Katy Perry tune.

The band toured extensively for three years, and audiences waited expectantly for what Ian Williams, Dave Konopka, John Stanier and Tyondai Braxton would come up with next.

Alas, this year's curve ball wasn't just that they were releasing their sophomore set, *Gloss Drop*, but that Braxton, the closest thing to a singer the band had, was quitting. While there was no question that Williams, Konopka and Stanier were going to stick together and pursue the prog, the larger question was: What were they going to sound like?

Fans and critics shouldn't have worried. *Gloss Drop*, while more uneven than *Mirrored*, shines. It's a testament to how great Battles are, considering they were making the album while losing a member.

The story, as Konopka tells it: "Ty came into the studio with us, but for some reason, it wasn't gelling. We had a body of work, but none of us were communicating at all," he says. "I don't think he was interested in being in a band with us anymore. . . . He had other motives; he was more interested in pursuing his own career, and he didn't want to tour. And we did want to tour—it's the only way [a band] can make money."

Braxton's departure "was a really healthy kick in the ass for us," Konopka says. "It's kind of like when you have a table with four legs, and one of them is wobbly, and when you remove that leg, it becomes a tripod and will never be wobbly!"

And so the rest of Battles restructured the album. "The timing of it all sucked," Konopka says. "I wish he didn't come into the studio with us because the three of us had to go back and take his parts off the table because they were no longer applicable."

Contrary to popular misconception, *Gloss Drop* was not complete when Braxton left. "It looked like someone blew up a shed on top of a lake and there were all these floating pieces," Konopka relates. "And it was just us taking those pieces and trying to build something new."

"[The album] looked like someone blew up a shed on top of a lake and there were all these floating pieces."

That something new involved not just learning how to play as a trio, but also trying to figure out how to present certain songs.

While getting a new singer was out of the question ("I didn't want someone on this permanent document that I invested so much of my creative energy in," Konopka says), the solution—introducing guest singers such as Gary Numan and Blonde Redhead singer Kazu Makino—allowed them to create a happy compromise.

It also granted Battles the ability to up the ante on their visual show; live, these songs have guest singers projected onstage, as if part of the band at that moment. In that sense, they still have that futuristic, man-machine thing going. In short? They're still Battles.

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BATTLES

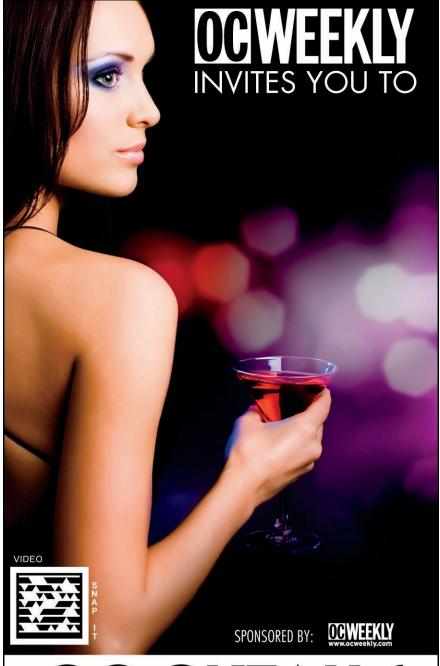
perform with Nisennenmondai and Cgak at the Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, (909) 865-3802; www.theglasshouse.us. Sun., 7 p.m. \$15. All ages.



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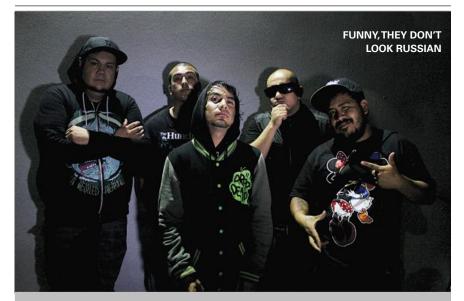
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perform with Chencha Berrinches, Red Store Bums, La Banda Skalavera, Matmoska, Left Alone and many others at the No Violence In Our Scene festival at the Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, (888) 862-9573; www.yosttheater.com. Sat., 1-10 p.m. \$15. All ages.

Representing OC hardcore at Saturday's No Violence In Our Scene festival are Mafia Rusa, a two-guitar five-piece of guys who grew up on classic OC hardcore and ska and sing in Spanish. Equally at home at the Whisky a Go-Go or a (really loud) backyard barbecue, they bring aggro-skank straight to the grill with a style that's Tijuana No! on an SS Decontrol trip, sans horns. Bassist Hector Rivera talks about the band's seven years as SoCal hardcore stalwarts.

OC Weekly: How were Mafia Rusa formed?

Hector Rivera: It began as a side project; we came together from previous bands and just decided to jam out. We all were playing local backyard shows, and we all decided to try something new. We have been together for seven years, with a couple of lineup changes. But we are currently back to the original lineup, which has been the strongest and most consistent yet. Our album Hong Kong Horror is due out in December.

Your sound is mostly hardcore, with some ska breaks. How did your sound evolve?

I grew up when the hardcore movement was going strong, with people collecting vinvl and 7- inches, and that's how I brought my piece into the band. Most of the members are into hardcore but also listen to different styles of music. The Mexican ska-core movement had a huge influence on us as well. We play what we like to play; for our newer material, we will try to incorporate more of a surf style and whatever can get thrown in.

The band's name translates to "Russian Mob." What's the connection?

It came from a movie we saw called Nicotina. There's no actual connection to the actual Russian mob; it just sounded unique and is an interesting part of the movie, so we figured we'd go with it.

Your songs are written in Spanish. Does your music transcend language barriers?

There have been people who do not know one word of Spanish and can get into what we play and can sing our lyrics, yet they do not know what they're actually saving.

What have seven years on the hardcore scene taught you?

Everyone has to pay their dues and earn time slots for shows; we are just now, I feel, getting recognition for the hard work we have done.

What's been the most hardcore moment thus far?

Two months ago, we got tagged in a picture online in which there was this person who got our band's logo tattooed on him. The people were from Mexico City, and that was a real honor for us to know that someone will actually have our band name tattooed on him for the rest of his life. That is pretty hardcore in my book. Also knowing that people outside LA and Orange County have heard about us is pretty awesome.

Your tunes make me want to thrash my desk. And yet you're playing a No Violence festival?

Yeah, our music is pretty fast, loud and can sound like it would cause violence, but we're pretty much just chill. And yes, we believe there shouldn't be violence in the scene. The festival was actually started by the band La Pobreska due to a close friend of theirs who was a victim of violence. Violence has no place anywhere, especially in the scene. It's all about having a good time and enjoying some good music.

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this week

THURSDAY, OCT. 13

ACOUSTIC ALCHEMY; SHERMAN FOWLER:

The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

ADRYON AND THE STONECUTTERS: Tantalum Restaurant, 6272 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. A, Long Beach, 562-431-1414, www.tantalumrestaurant.com

BLUE MACHINE: Live blues, 7-10:30 p.m. Iva Lee's, 555 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-361-2855, www.ivalees.com.

BOY & BEAR: 9 p.m., \$10. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

CORDAY: Durty Nelly's, 2915 Red Hill Ave., Ste. G101, Costa Mesa, 714-957-1951, www.durtynellysoc.com.

THE CORNFED PROJECT: The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

DAVE STEWART: 9 p.m., free. Skosh Monahan's, 2000 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa, 949-548-0099, www.skoshmonahans.com.

DEREK BORDEAUX: \$5. Kobe Japanese Steak House, 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com.

JUST THE 2 OF US: 6:30-10 p.m., free. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com.

POISON IDEA; ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN; RATS IN THE WALLS: Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

RON KOBAYASHITRIO: 6:30 p.m., free. Bayside Restaurant, 900 Bayside Dr., Newport Beach, 949-721-1222 www.havsiderestaurant.com

WE ARE ARSENAL; CANDLELIGHT RED: House of Blues, 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

FRIDAY, OCT. 14
THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD SHOW: City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Áve., Anaheim, 714-712-2750, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

AZAR LAWRENCE QUINTET FEATURING GILBERT CASTELLANOS: Sea Bird Jazz Lounge, 730 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-437-8355, www.seabirdjazzlounge.com/wp/.

BELLA NOVELA; LOS MYSTERIOSOS: Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

BLUE POWDA MONKEYS; STARVING FOR GRAVITY: House of Blues, 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

BLUE SCHOLARS: Galaxy Concert Theatre, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.galaxytheatre.com.

DAVE STEWART: 9 p.m., free. Skosh Monahan's, 2000 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa, 949-548-0099, www.skoshmonahans.com.

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE: 9 p.m., \$35 in advance. Fox Theater Pomona, 303 S. Garey Ave., Pomona, 877-283-6976, www.foxpomona.com.

ELECTRONIC WARFARE V: 8 p.m., \$7. The Tropics Lounge, 1842 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-525-1977, www.thetropicslounge.com.

EMILY SIMONIAN; SCOUT SMITH; JANELLE VIANO: Viento y Agua Gallery, 4007 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-434-1182,

www.vientoyaguacoffeehouse.com.

FABULOUS NOMADS: Tiki Bar, 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-548-3533, www.tikibaroc.com.

FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE: 8 p.m., \$23.50-\$25. The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

JACK MACK & THE HEART ATTACK: Harvelle's Long Beach, 206 The Promenade N., Long Beach, 310-395-1676

KENNY SARA & THE SOUNDS OF NEW

ORLEANS: 7 p.m., free. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com.

KUCI DJS: 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., free. The LAB Anti-Mall, 2930 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, 714-966-6660, www.thelab.com.

KYLE GASS BAND: DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge, 5205 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-498-2461, www.dipiazzas.com.

METALACHI: The Juke Joint, 735 N. Anaheim Blvd.,

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Anaheim, 714-778-1397, www.thejukejointbar.com. THE MIDS: 8:30 p.m. Marlin Bar & Grill, 16651 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, 714-842-5587,

www.marlinbarhb.com. ROBERT SCHWARTZMAN: Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.

RON SNYDER: Paradise Piano Bar & Restaurant, 1800 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-590-8773, www.paradisepianobar.com.

WEST COAST STRAYZ: Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027.

SATURDAY, OCT. 15 AIR SUPPLY: City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-712-2750, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

BLOOD ON THE DANCE FLOOR: ANGEL SPIT: NEW YEARS DAY: Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com

THE BLUE NOTE PROJECT; JORGE

ALEJANDRO & THE NUVOLUTION: Viento y Agua Gallery, 4007 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-434-1182, www.vientoyaguacoffeehouse.com.

BOXCAR 7; SOUL REVUE: Boomer's, 5456 E. Del Amo Blvd., Long Beach, 562-421-9847. **BROTHER:** The Coach House, 33157 Camino

Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-

8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

CADILLAC TRAMPS: 7 p.m., \$15. Galaxy Concert
Theatre, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.galaxytheatre.com.

CHAIN REACTION: Kobe Japanese Steak House, 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com.

DAMION WOLFE: The Gypsy Den, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-835-8840, www.gypsyden.com.

DAVE STEWART: 9 p.m., free. Skosh Monahan's, 2000 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa, 949-548-0099. www.skoshmonahans.com.

DIDGERIDOO JAM: 5-7:30 p.m., free. The Neighborhood Cup, 1 Journey, Aliso Viejo, 949-716-5100,

www.theneighborhoodcup.com.

DJ LITO: 9 p.m. Commonwealth Lounge, 112 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-525-8888, www.commonwealthlounge.com.

HOUNDS & HARLOTS: The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

INCUBUS: Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, 8808 Irvine Center Dr., Irvine, 213-480-3232. JAMM1NATION: Location 1980, 1980 Placentia

Ave., Costa Mesa.

KENNY SARA & THE SOUNDS OF NEW ORLEANS: 7 p.m., free. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com.

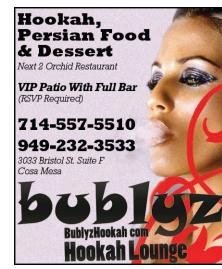
KIEV; JERAMIAH RED; PAULIE PESH: 8 p.m., \$12.50. House of Blues, 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583. www.hob.com/anaheim.

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MIKE HAMILTON: French 75 Bistro and Champagne Bar, 1464 Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-494-8444,











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NO VIOLENCE IN OUR SCENE MUSICAL FESTI-VAL, VIERNES 13; CHENCHA; BERRINCHES: 1 p.m., \$15. The Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, 888-862-9573, www.yosttheater.com.

OLD DEATH WHISPERER; WITH A BIBLE & A GUN; BIG JUGS: The Juke Joint, 735 N. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-778-1397, www.thejukejointbar.com.

PAPA MICHIGAN: Tiki Bar, 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-548-3533, www.tikibaroc.com. POSSE ON BROADWAY, FEATURING

POSSE ON BROADWAY, FEATURING ABANDONED POOLS; THE COLOURISTS:

7 p.m., free, www.posseonbroadway.com. Downtown Santa Ana Artists Village, 208 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: IN CONCERT: 7:30 p.m., \$28.50-\$142.50. Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-704-2400, www.hondacenter.com.

REGGAE BRUNCH: 9 a.m., \$12.95-\$24.95. House of Blues, 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

ROD PIAZZA & HIS MIGHTY FLYERS: Harvelle's Long Beach, 206 The Promenade N., Long Beach, 310-395-1676.

RON KOBAYASHI TRIO: 8 p.m., free. Bistango, 19100 Von Karman Ave., Irvine, 949-752-5222, www.bistango.com.

WEST COAST STRAYZ: Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027.

SUNDAY, OCT. 16

ABBEY ROAD: Orange County Market Place, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, 714-267-6777, www.ocmarketplace.com.

CRAIG OWENS: Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.
COREY EDWARDS: The International Coffee House, 1015 Imperial Hwy., Brea, 714-671-7803.

THE FLAMIN' GROOVIES; THE ABIGAILS; THE SAVOYS: Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

THE 44'S; KID RAMOS: Tiki Bar, 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-548-3533, www.tikibaroc.com.

GAME: Galaxy Concert Theatre, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.galaxytheatre.com.

GOSPEL BRUNCH: 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., \$16.50-\$36. House of Blues, 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

THE INGLORIOUS TARANTINOS: 10 p.m., free. Auld Dubliner, 71 S. Pine Ave., Long Beach, 562-437-8300, www.aulddubliner.com.

JAZZ AT GEORGE'S: St. George's Episcopal Church, 23802 Avenida de la Carlota, Laguna Hills.

KATHY'S GARAGE BAND: 12 p.m. Original Mike's, 100 S. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-550-7764, www.originalmikes.com.

LATIN JAZZ SYNDICATE: 6 p.m. Kobe Japanese Steak House, 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com.

LIVE BANDS: 4:30 p.m. Pierce Street Annex, 330 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa, 949-646-8500, www.piercestreetonline.com.

LOVE-HOPE-CITY: 10:30 a.m., free. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.

METRONOMY: Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

MISSILES OF OCTOBER: 4 p.m., free. Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027.

NEW ORLEANS BARBEQUE: Live music every Sunday, 1 p.m., \$30. Grand Romance River Boat, 200 Aquarium Way No. 4, Long Beach, 562-628-1600, www.grandromance.com.

POLYNESIAN NIGHT AT THE REEF: Live dancing and music on the patio, 4 p.m., free. Reef Lounge on the Water, 880 S. Harbor Scenic Dr., Long Beach, 562-435-8013, www.reefrestaurant.com.

SGT. PEPPERS: 10:30 a.m. Kobe Japanese Steak House, 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com.

THE SOUNDS; NATALIA KILLS; KIDS AT THE BAR: 8 p.m., \$22.50-\$25. House of Blues, 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.

TECH N9NE: City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-712-2750, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com. **TIJUANA DOGS:** The Swallow's Inn, 31786 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, 949-493-3188, www.swallowsinn.com.

MONDAY, OCT. 17

DJ SOULESS: 8 p.m., free. Back Alley Bar & Grill, 116 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace.com/backalleyfullerton.

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM: City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-712-2750, www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com.

POUL PEDERSON: 7 p.m. Renaissance Dana Point, 24701 Del Prado, Dana Point, 949-661-6003, www.renaissance-danapoint.com.

RICK SOLEM: 6:30-10 p.m. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com.

SHAUN HAGUE: 9 p.m., free. Saint Rocke, 142 Pacific Coast Hwy., Hermosa Beach, 310-372-0035, www.saintrocke.com.

VESPERTINES: 9 p.m., free. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

TUESDAY, OCT. 18

DAVE STEWART: 9 p.m., free. Skosh Monahan's, 2000 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa, 949-548-0099, www.skoshmonahans.com.

LE GRAND BARR: 6:30 p.m. Savannah Steak & Chop House, 32441 St. of the Golden Lantern, Laguna Niguel, 949-493-7107, www.savannahchophouse.net.

PHIL SHANE: 7 p.m., free. Original Mike's, 100 S. Main. Santa Ana, 714-550-7764,

www.originalmikes.com.

STRANGELOVE: The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen,
122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-8717469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

SONGWRITER'S SHOWCASE: Hosted by Christina Dietz, 8-11 p.m., free. Blue Laguna, 696 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-376-2583, www.bluelagunaoc.com.

VAMPIRES EVERYWHERE; DAVEY SUICIDE; AWAKEN THE EMPIRE: 7:30 p.m., \$10. Chain Reaction, 1652 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, 714-635-6067, www.allages.com.

WALTER & QUETZAL: Paradise Piano Bar & Restaurant, 1800 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-590-8773, www.paradisepianobar.com.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 19

DAN LEFLER AND THE DANIMALS: 7:30 p.m.
Renaissance Dana Point, 24701 Del Prado,
Dana Point, 949-661-6003,
www.renaissance-danapoint.com.

DAVE STEWART: 9 p.m., free. Skosh Monahan's, 2000 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa, 949-548-0099, www.skoshmonahans.com.

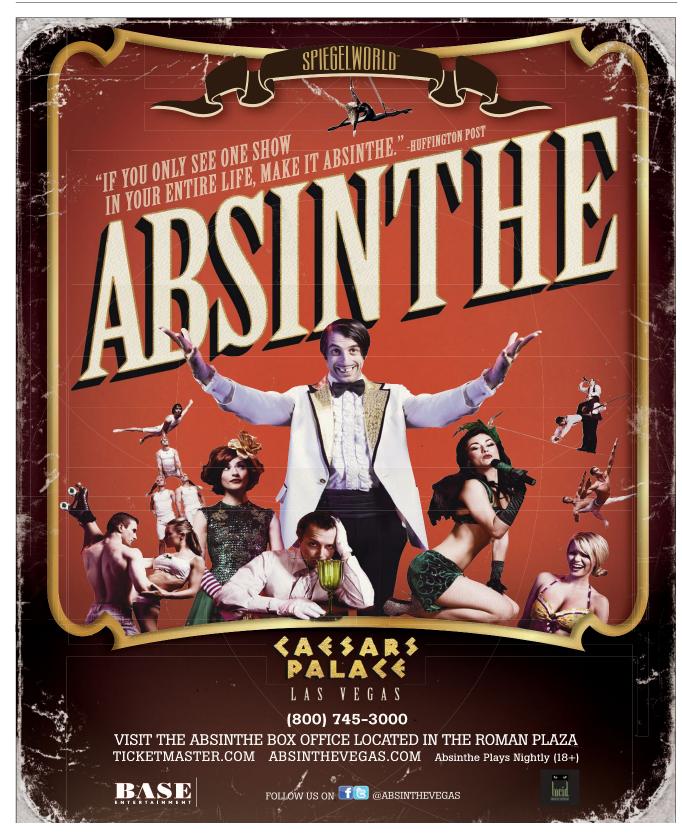
www.skoshmonahans.com. **THE ELVIS SHOW:** 9:30 p.m., free. The Continental Room, 115 W. Santa Fe Ave., Fullerton, 714-469-1879, www.myspace.com/thecontinentalroom.

JOHN DOE: 8 p.m. Galaxy Concert Theatre, Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.galaxytheatre.com.

THE JOHNSON CREEK STRANGLERS: The Blue Cafe, 217 Pine Ave., Long Beach, 562-436-3600, www.bluecafelive.com.

LE GRAND BARR: 6:30 p.m. Savannah Steak & Chop House, 32441 St. of the Golden Lantern, Laguna Niguel, 949-493-7107, www.savannahchophouse.net.

LEON RUSSELL; JENNY O: 8 p.m., \$35. The Coach







House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com

RICK SOLEM: 6:30-10 p.m. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com.

ROD FRIAS: 7 p.m., free. OC Tavern, 2369 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-542-8877.

SHABAZZ PALACES: 9 p.m., \$13. Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com.

WALTER MOLINA: 7 p.m., free. Utopia Good Food and Fine Arts Restaurant, 445 E. First St., Long Beach, 562-432-6888, www.utopiarestaurant.net.

WE ARE/SHE IS: 9 p.m., free. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

WEDNESDAY 13; MICHAEL MONROE: 8 p.m. Galaxy Concert Theatre, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd.. Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.galaxytheatre.com.

THURSDAY, OCT. 20
ADRYON AND THE STONECUTTERS: Tantalum
Restaurant, 6272 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. A, Long Beach, 562-431-1414, www.tantalumrestaurant.com.

BLUE MACHINE: Live blues, 7-10:30 p.m. Iva Lee's, 555 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-361-2855, www.ivalees.com.

CALLE 13: 9 p.m., \$42.50 in advance. House of Blues, 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583,

www.hob.com/anaheim. **DAVE STEWART:** 9 p.m., free. Skosh Monahan's, 2000 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa, 949-548-0099, www.skoshmonahans.com.

DEREK BORDEAUX: \$5. Kobe Japanese Steak House, 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com.

DUPP BROTHERS: Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027.

JUST THE 2 OF US: 6:30-10 p.m., free. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen, 1590 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com

MICKIE ARNETTE BAND: The Swallow's Inn, 31786 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, 949-493-3188. www.swallowsinn.com.

RON KOBAYASHITRIO: 6:30 p.m., free. Bayside Restaurant, 900 Bayside Dr., Newport Beach, 949-721-1222, www.baysiderestaurant.com.

YOUTH BRIGADE: The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

upcoming

OCTOBER

AMERICAN SONGBOOK: Sat., Oct. 29. Long Beach Arena.

ADRIAN BELEW; THE STICKMAN: Sat., Oct. 22. Galaxy Concert Theatre.

ALICE IN COOPERLAND: Mon., Oct. 31. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen. ANDREA MILLER: Sat., Oct. 29. Nieuport 17.

ANVIL: Sun., Oct. 30. The Coach House. ATOMIC PUNKS: Sun., Oct. 23. Orange County Market Place.

BANE; DEFEATER; MILES AWAY: Sat., Oct. 29. Chain Reaction

BARRELHOUSE ROCKERS: Fri., Oct. 28. Marine Room Tavern.

THE BEATS: Fri., Oct. 28. Memphis At the Santora.

BIG SANDY & HIS FLY RIGHT BOYS: AMBER FOXX: Fri., Oct. 21. The Juke Joint.

BILLY MAC BAND: Sat., Oct. 22. The Swallow's Inn

BLACK TONGUED BELLS: Sat., Oct. 29. Harvelle's Long Beach.

BLASPHEMOUS RUMOURS; RIO: Mon., Oct. 31. City National Grove of Anaheim.

BLUE MACHINE: Sat., Oct. 29. Kobe Japanese Steak House. BOOBIE TRAP;: Fri., Oct. 21. Tiki Bar.

BRIAN LYNN JONES & THE MISFIT COWBOYS: Fri., Oct. 28. The Swallow's Inn. CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH WITH TICKET TO RIDE:

Sun., Oct. 23. Kobe Japanese Steak House. CEDRIC BURNSIDE; ARTHUR ADAMS: Fri.,

Oct. 21. Harvelle's Long Beach. CHAPPED CHEEKS: Sun., Oct. 30, 2:30 p.m. The

Swallow's Inn. **COLLIE BUDDZ; GAPPY RANKS; NEW** KINGSTON: Wed., Oct. 26. The Yost Theater. CUBENSIS: Fri., Oct. 28. Galaxy Concert Theatre.

THE DAMNED: MANIC HISPANIC: CUTE LEPERS: Mon., Oct. 31. House of Blues

DAMNIT JANET: Sat. Oct. 29. Alex's Bar. THE YOUNG ROMANS; DAVIS FETTER: Fri., Oct. 21. Viento y Agua Gallery.

DAZY LITE; SACHA DAWN; ROYAL ALBATROSS: Sat., Oct. 22. Viento y Agua Gallery. DEAD MANS PARTY: Sat., Oct. 29. Galaxy Concert Theatre.

DESPYZE: Sun., Oct. 23. The Blue Cafe. DIANE SCHUUR: Sun., Oct. 23. The Coach House. DJ ADJECTIVE: Sat., Oct. 29. Memphis At the Santora.

DJ DREW: Wed., Oct. 26. House of Blues. DREAD ZEPPELIN: Fri., Oct. 21. The Coach House. EKOLU; NATURAL VIBRATIONS: Sun., Oct. 23. Tiki Bar.

FAMILY STYLE: Fri., Oct. 28. Original Mike's. FEELGOOD; DJ GIANGSTAR: Sat., Oct. 22. House of Blues

THE FELICE BROTHERS: Sat., Oct. 29. Detroit Bar.

FOO FOR LESS: Thu., Oct. 27. Tiki Bar. GEOFFREY J: Fri., Oct. 28. The Gypsy Den. GARY SINISE & THE LT. DAN BAND: Sat. Oct. 29. The Coach House

GEEZER; ADAM BONES: Thu., Oct. 27. House of Blues

GODS OF THUNDER: Sat., Oct. 29. Orange County Market Place. THE GREEN; GIANT PANDA; GUERILLA DUB

SQUAD: Sat., Oct. 29. The Yost Theater. HARM'S WAY; RIOT GUN; STICK IN THE MUD:

Tue. Oct. 25. House of Blues. HE'S MY BROTHER SHE'S MY SISTER; THE

MUMLERS: Mon., Oct. 24. Galaxy Concert Theatre. IMMOLATION; JUNGLE ROT; GIGAN: Sat.,

Oct. 22. Chain Reaction. JONNY LANG: Sun., Oct. 30. House of Blues. KK MARTIN: Sat., Oct. 22. The Gypsy Den. KELLY BOYZ: Sat., Oct. 29. The Swallow's Inn

LAZARUS CASKET; ARIOCH; VADE MECUM: Sat., Oct. 29. DiPiazza's Restaurant & Lounge.

LED ZEPLAND: Fri., Oct. 21. DiPiazza's Restaurant

& Lounge. **LEMONHEADS; THE GROMBLE:** Fri., Oct. 28. The Coach House.

LIL BRIAN & THE ZYDECO TRAVELERS: Sat.,

Oct. 22. Harvelle's Long Beach. LYDIA MORENO: Thu., Oct. 27. Paradise Piano Bar & Restaurant.

MALE BONDING: Fri., Oct. 28. Galaxy ${\bf Concert\ Theatre}.$

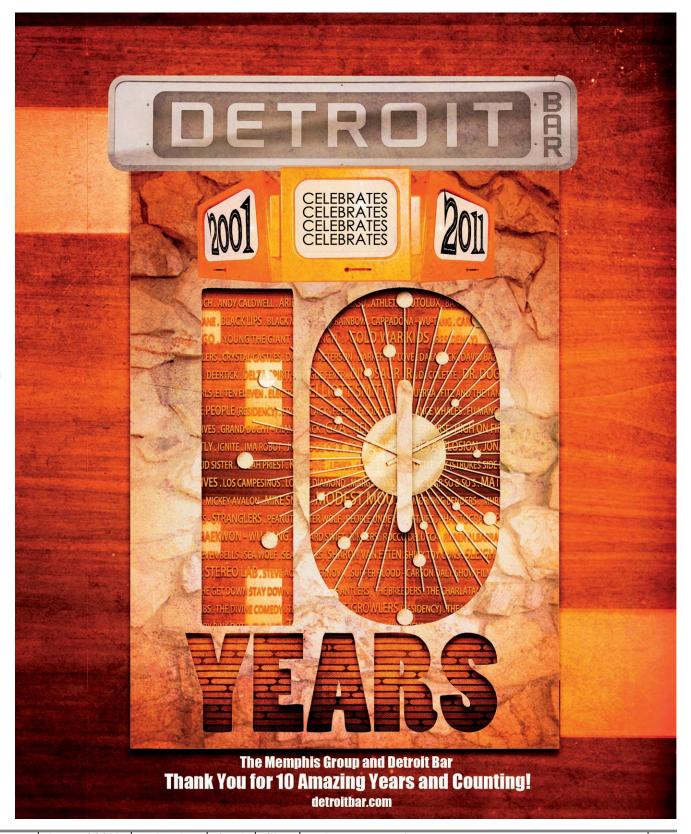
MARIA TAYLOR: Fri., Oct. 21. Galaxy Concert Theatre. MARVIN HAMLISCH FROM BROADWAY TO HOLLYWOOD: Sun., Oct. 30. Cerritos Center. MELISSA MANCHESTER: Sat., Oct. 22. The Coach House

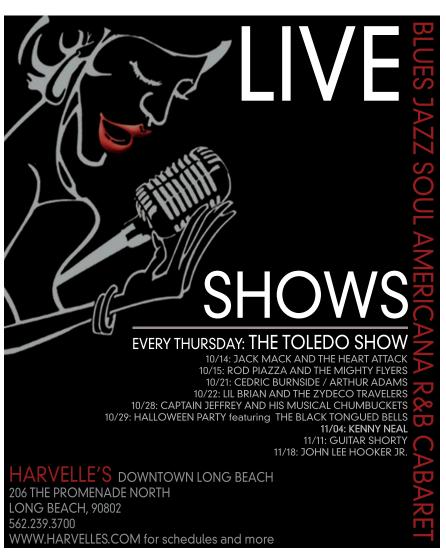
NO BUNNY; THEE CORMANS; DEATH HYMN NUMBER 9: Sun., Oct. 30. Alex's Bar.

NOWHERE MAN: Sat., Oct. 29. Kobe Japanese Steak House.

PAT GREEN: Fri., Oct. 21. House of Blues. PICTURE PLANE: Sun., Oct. 23. Galaxy Concert Theatre.

RADIOACTIVE CHICKEN HEADS; DJ VERTIGO;













DJ MICHELLE: Sun., Oct. 30. The Copper Door. RON AND RICK ILLES: Sun., Oct. 23. Congregational Church of Fullerton

SAILORS OF NEPTUNE; BLACKSTRAP MOLASSES: Sat., Oct. 29. The Gypsy Den. SCOTTY TECCE & THE TECCEMATICS: Fri., Oct. 21. The Juke Joint.

SHAWN JONES: Sun., Oct. 23. The Swallow's Inn. SHAKEY PETE BAND: Sun., Oct. 30, noon. Original Mike's.

SIMPKIN PROJECT: Fri., Oct. 21. Kobe Japanese Steak House

SKALLOWEEN 2011, LEFT ALONE; LA POBRESKA: Sun., Oct. 23. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen.

SLEEPING WITH ANGELS; FAR FROM FATE: Sun., Oct. 23. House of Blues.

SOCIAL DISTORTION: Sat., Oct. 22. Verizon Wireless Amphitheater.

THE STRANGERS: Fri., Oct. 21; Sat., Oct. 22. Marine Room Tavern

SWING SHIFT: Fri., Oct. 21. The Swallow's Inn. TRIBUTE TO SIR ELTON JOHN AND BILLY JOEL: Sun., Oct. 23. City National Grove of Anaheim.

THEE OH SEES: Fri., Oct. 28. Alex's Bar. THIRD RAIL BAND: Sat., Oct. 29. Marine Room Tavern.

THROWDOWN; CARNIFEX; FIRST BLOOD: Sun., Oct. 23. Chain Reaction.

TIGER ARMY: Fri., Oct. 28; Sat., Oct. 29. City

National Grove of Anaheim.

TYGHTSHIP: Sat., Oct. 22, 8 p.m. Kobe Japanese

Steak House.
VIERNES 13: Thu., Oct. 27. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen.

VOODOO GLOW SKULLS; SEDERRA; WRONG BEACH: Sat., Oct. 22. Alex's Bar.

WAYNETHETRAIN HANCOCK; MOONLIGHT TRIO: CAPTAIN JEFFREY & HIS MUSICAL CHUMBUCKETS: Wed., Oct. 26. The Juke Joint. YNGWIE MALMSTEEN: Fri., Oct. 28. House

of Blues. **ZOMBIE PARTY:** Sun., Oct. 23; Mon., Oct. 24. Ibiza.

NOVEMBER

THE ACACIA STRAIN; TERROR; STRAY FROM THE PATH: Fri., Nov. 11; Sat., Nov. 12. Chain Reaction

AEROSMYTH; FAN HALEN; BONFIRE: Sat., Nov. 5. City National Grove of Anaheim. AUSTIN GIBBS: Tue., Nov. 8. Chain Reaction. AUSTRA; GRIMES: Wed., Nov. 9. Detroit Bar. AXE MURDER BOYZ: Sun., Nov. 6. Chain Reaction. BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME: Fri., Nov. 25. House of Blues.

BACK POCKET MEMORY; SILVER SNAKE: Fri., Nov. 4. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen.

THE BANGLES;: Sat., Nov. 12. House of Blues. BERLIN: Sat., Nov. 26. The Coach House. BIG BOI: Fri., Nov. 18. Galaxy Concert Theatre. BIRD BY BIRD: Sun., Nov. 13. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen.

BLACK LIPS: Fri., Nov. 11. Galaxy Concert Theatre. THE BLED: Sat., Nov. 26. Chain Reaction. BOB LOG III ONE MAN BAND: Sat., Nov. 26. The

Juke Joint BOOTS ELECTRIC: Sun., Nov. 6. The Yost Theater. CASHED OUT: Sat., Nov. 19. The Juke Joint. CHRIS BROWN; T-PAIN; TYGA: Sat., Nov. 5.

Verizon Wireless Amphitheater. CHRIS ISAAK: Sun., Nov. 27. City National Grove of Anaheim.

DAVE MASON: Sat., Nov. 12. The Coach House. DIRTY HEADS; GYM CLASS HEROS: Sat., Nov. 19. City National Grove of Anaheim.

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN: Sun., Nov. 6. Orange County Market Place. DRAMARAMA; USELESS KEYS: Fri., Nov. 4; Sat.,

Nov. 5. House of Blues. FAMILY FORCE 5: Sun., Nov. 13. Chain Reaction.

FILTER: Fri., Nov. 4. The Coach House. 40 OZTO FREEDOM: Wed., Nov. 23. City National Grove of Anaheim.

FUTURE ISLANDS: Thu., Nov. 17. Alex's Bar. GAMBLER'S MARK: Fri., Nov. 11. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen.

GUANABATZ; BUZZ CAMPBELL; THE EMBALMERS: Sat., Nov. 12. The Juke Joint. **GUITAR SHORTY:** Fri., Nov. 11. Harvelle's Long Beach.

HIT THE LIGHTS; THE DANGEROUS; SUMMER: Thu., Nov. 10. Chain Reaction.

JOHN LEE HOOKER JR.: Fri., Nov. 18. Harvelle's

Long Beach

KATE VOEGELE: Fri., Nov. 4. The Yost Theater.

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KENNY NEAL: Fri., Nov. 4. Harvelle's Long Beach. KOFFIN KATS; HENCHMEN; LOS CREEPERS: Fri., Nov. 18. Fri., Nov. 18. The Juke Joint

LED ZEPPELIN 2: Thu., Nov. 3, 7 p.m., \$15. The Yost Theater.

LIONS: Sat., Nov. 12. Alex's Bar.

MAESTRO DIEMECKE'S CONCERTO FIESTA OTOÑAL FOR MARIMBA AND ORCHESTRA: Sat., Nov. 12. Long Beach Terrace Theater. **THE MAINE:** Tue., Nov. 22. Chain Reaction.

MAYDAY PARADE: Sat., Nov. 5. House of Blues. MAYHEM: Sat., Nov. 26. Galaxy Concert Theatre. NEW ZEALAND STRING QUARTET: Sat., Nov. 5. Soka University.

RANDY PILE: Thu., Nov. 3. Saddleback College McKinney Theatre.

RICHARD CHEESE AND LOUNGE AGAINST THE MACHINE: Sat., Nov. 26. House of Blues. ROBERT CRAY: Thu., Nov. 17. The Coach House. SACRED SONGS OF KURDISTAN WITH ALIAKBAR MORADI: Sat., Nov. 5. Irvine Civic Center.

SHONEN KNIFE; SHANNON & THE CLAMS:

Thu., Nov. 3. Alex's Bar.

SHERI PEDIGO; DANIEL SCHOENBERG: Sat.,

Nov. 5. Viento y Agua Gallery.

THE STATIC JACKS; CHAIN GANG; 1974; KITTEN: Thu., Nov. 17. Detroit Bar. STEEL PULSE: Wed., Nov. 2. The

Coach House. STEPHEN STILLS: Tue., Nov. 22. City National

Grove of Anaheim STEVE AOKI: Sat., Nov. 26. City National Grove of Anaheim

STRUNZ AND FARAH: Sun., Nov. 13. The Coach House.

TESLA: Sun., Nov. 20. House of Blues.

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS: Wed., Nov. 16. House of Blues

3 GUITAR HEROES: MICHAEL SCHENKER; ULI JON ROTH; LESLIE WEST: Thu., Nov. 10. City National Grove of Anaheim.

THRICE; LA DISPUTE; MOVING MOUNTAINS: Wed., Nov. 9. House of Blues.

THE TIKIYAKI ORCHESTRA; MARINA THE FIRE

EATING MERMAID: Sat., Nov. 5, \$25. Don the Beachcomber.

TRAPPED UNDER ICE; HUNDRETH;

BACKTRACK: Wed., Nov. 9. Chain Reaction. TRENCHTOWN: Sat., Nov. 5. House of Blues. THE TUBES: Fri., Nov. 25. The Coach House. TURN THE PAGE: Sat., Nov. 5. Orange County Market Place. **TYRONE WELLS:** Fri., Nov. 18. House

of Blues.

UCI JAZZ ORCHESTRA CONCERT: Wed., Nov. 2. Claire Trevor Theatre.

WALE: Sun., Nov. 20. The Yost Theater.

"WEIRD AL" YANKOVIC: Fri., Nov. 11. City National

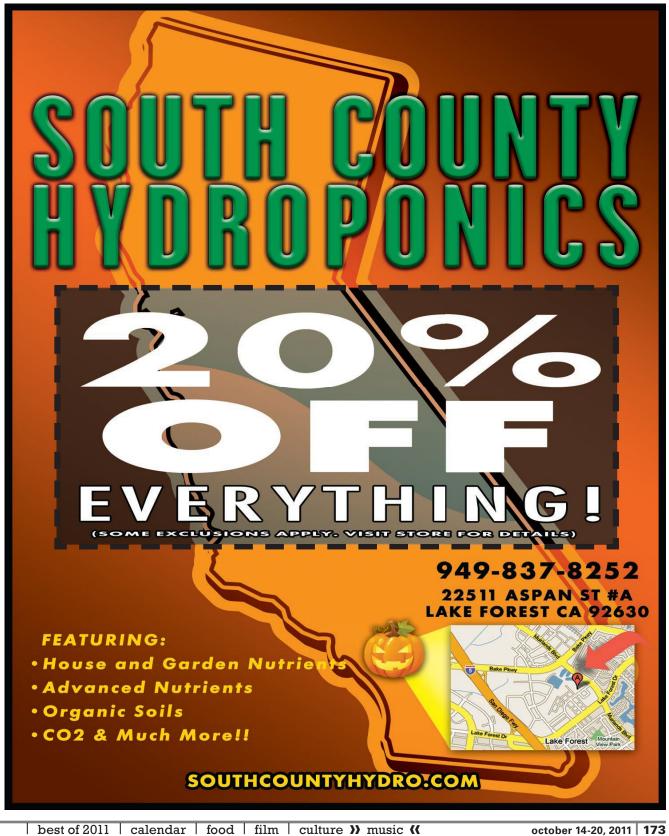
Grove of Anaheim.

THE WHISPERS: Sat., Nov. 12. City National Grove of Anaheim.

DECEMBER

ANDREA BOCELLI: Sun., Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m. Honda Center.

BIG SEAN: Fri., Dec. 23. Galaxy Concert Theatre.







BOYZ II MEN: Sun., Dec. 18. City National Grove of Anahaim

THE CHARIOT; VANNA; THE CRIMSON ARMADA: Sun., Dec. 4. Chain Reaction.

CHRISTMAS TIME TOGETHER: Thu., Dec. 22. The Coach House.

DADA: Sat., Dec. 31. The Coach House. DARK FUNERAL: Mon., Dec. 19. Galaxy

Concert Theatre.

DAVID ARCHULETA: Sat., Dec. 17. City National

Grove of Anaheim.

DINOSAUR JR.; HENRY ROLLINS; PIERCED ARROWS: Mon., Dec. 12. Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

GARY HOEY: Fri., Dec. 16. The Coach House.
THE GHOST INSIDE: Sat., Dec. 17.
Chair Braction

THE GROWLERS: Fri., Dec. 23. Galaxy Concert Theatre.

I SET MY FRIENDS ON FIRE; WE ARE THE OCEAN: Sun., Dec. 18. House of Blues.

IRATION; MICAH BROWN: Sun., Dec. 18. House of Blues.

LOS LOBOS; BASTARD WINOS: Thu., Dec. 1. The Coach House.

PETER MURPHY; SHE WANTS REVENGE: Thu., Dec. 8. Galaxy Concert Theatre.

PROTEST THE HERO; SCALE THE SUMMIT; LAST CHANCE TO REASON: Wed., Dec. 7. Chain Reaction.

SHAWN COLVIN: Sat., Dec. 17. The Coach House.

UCI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: Sat., Dec. 3.
Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

WAR: Thu., Dec. 29. Thu., Dec. 29. City National Grove of Anaheim.

X: Wed., Dec. 14. The Coach House.

classical

THE GRIFFITT TRIO: Featuring Haroutune Bedelian on violin, Dennis Parker on cello, and Lorna Griffitt on piano, Sat., Oct. 15. UCI Winifred Smith Hall, 4000 Mesa Rd., Portola Hills, 949-494-8971.

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY: Oct. 20-22. Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, 615 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, 714-556-2787, www.scfta.org.

club*guide

rock

ANARCHY LIBRARY: 13250 Woodruff Ave.,
Downey, 562-803-9134, www.theanarchylibrary.
com. Thu: 9 p.m., '80s Thursday, DJs spinning your
favorite '80s tunes, free. Fri: 9 p.m., Friday Night
Holocaust, Anarchy DJs spinning punk rock and
'80s new wave, free. Tue: 8 p.m., \$2 Tuesdays,
two-buck drink specials!

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace. com/backalleyfullerton. Thu: 9 p.m., '80s Enough, free. Tue: 10 p.m., Dig, free.

BLUE LAGUNA: 696 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-376-2583, www.bluelagunaoc.com. Mon: 9-11:30 p.m., Local Music Monday.
THE CELLAR: 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach,

THE CELLAR: 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-495-9000, thecellarlbc.ning.com. Wed: 8 p.m., Long Beach Experiment, playing indie, folk, rock and experimental, \$5.
DOLL HUT: 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim, 714-533-

DOLL HUT: 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim, 714-533-1286, www.myspace.com/newhut. Wed: 9 p.m., Hump Night, free.

GALLAGHER'S PUB & GRILL: 300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. 113, Huntington Beach, 714-536-2422, www.gallagherspub.com. Mon: 9 p.m., Boardnight, free.

GASLAMP RESTAURANT & BAR: 6251 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-596-4718, www. thegaslamprestaurant.com. Fri: 5 p.m., Knyght Rider. Sat: 5 p.m., The Thuggs.

KAVIKAS GRILL & BAR: 95 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-432-8700, www.kavikas.com. Wed: 8 p.m., Live Music, with Lars, free.

MARINE ROOM TAVERN: 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027. Tue: 8 p.m., Beth Fitchet Wood Songwriters Showcase, free.

OC TAVERN: 2369 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-542-8877. Sun: 3:30 p.m., Roach's Corner, free. PEROS: 117 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-960-

PEROS: 117 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-96 9996, www.perqs.com. Fri, Sat: 9 p.m., Live Band. free.

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QUE SERA: 1923 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-599-6170, www.thequesera.com. Mon: 9 p.m., Manic Monday With Miss Blatz. \$5.

THE SLIDEBAR ROCK-N-ROLL KITCHEN: 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com. Tue: 9 p.m., '80s Night.

TIA JUANA'S LONG BAR & GRILL: 14988 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine, 949-551-2998, www.tiajuanas. com. Sun: 6 p.m., Live Band Day, \$5. Wed: 8 p.m., Phil Shane Hot Damn, free.

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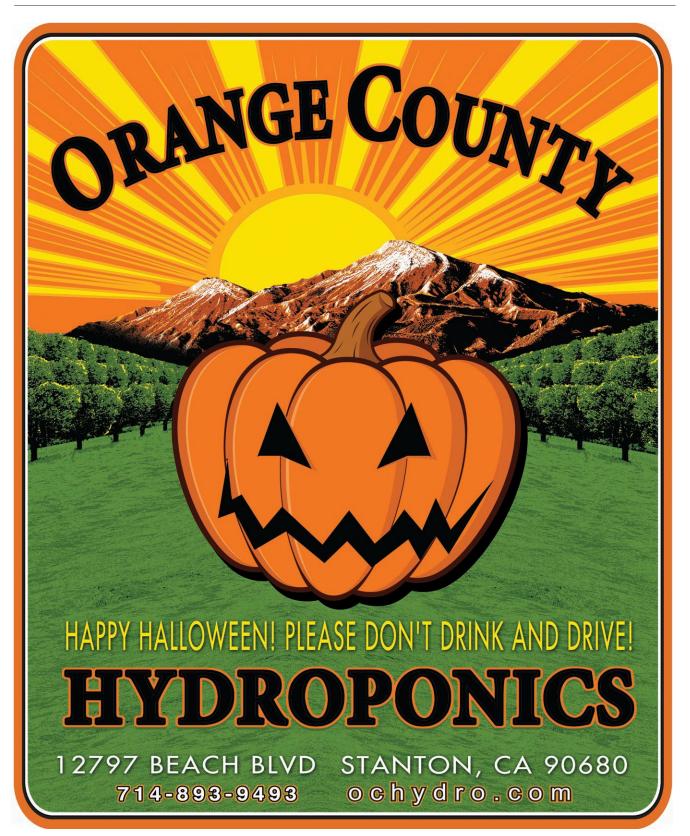
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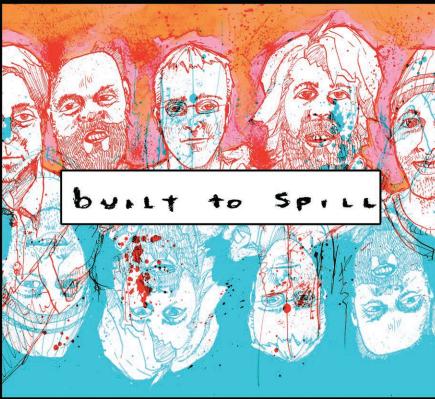
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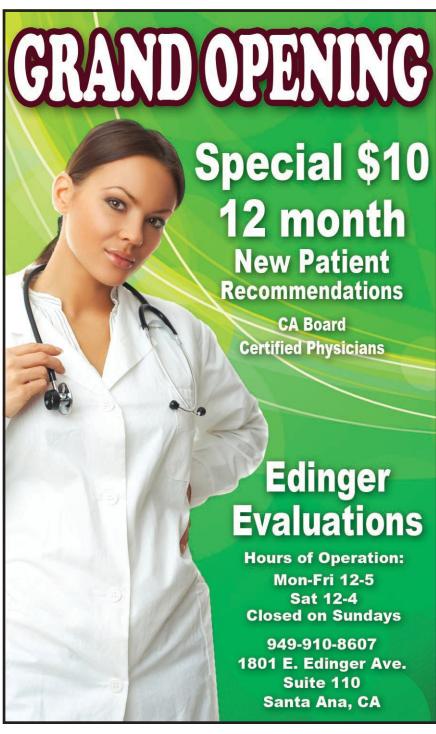
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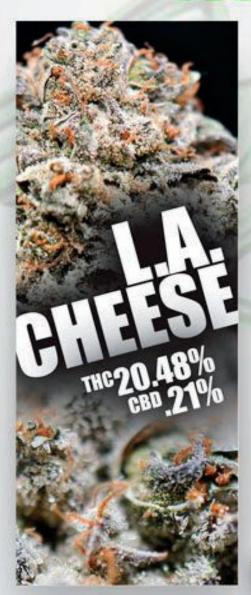
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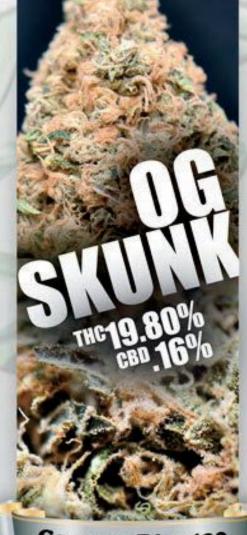
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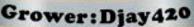




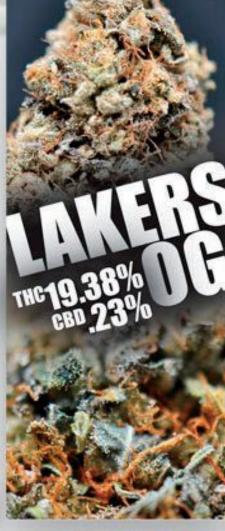
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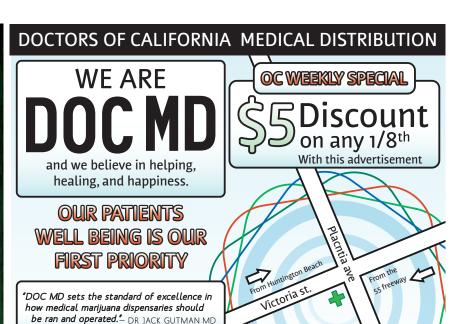




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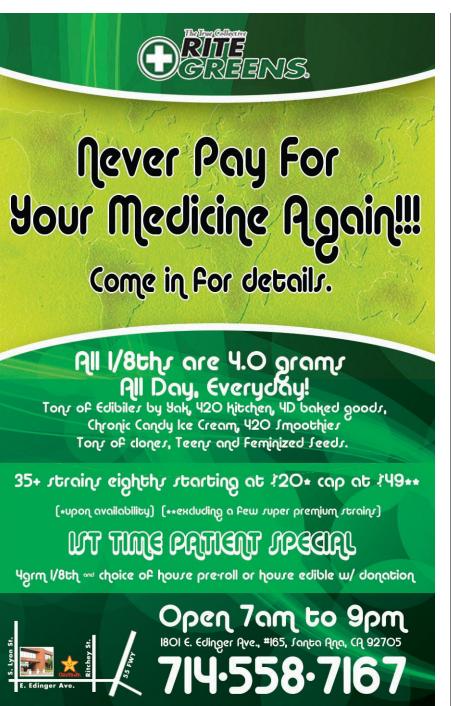






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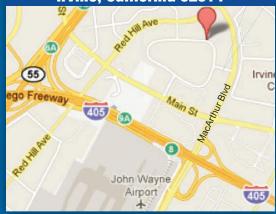


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ANARCHY LIBRARY: 13250 Woodruff Ave., Downey, 562-803-9134, www.theanarchylibrary. com. Sun: 8 p.m., \$3 Sundays, DJs playing '60s garage, '70s punk, '80s new wave, '90s indie and your requests, free.

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949-515-4650, www.myspace.com/theavalonbar. Mon: 9 p.m., Playlist Pop! Bring your iPod, free. Tue: 10 p.m.. Solid State, free.

Tue: 10 p.m., Solid State, free.

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 W. Wilshire Ave.,
Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace.
com/backalleyfullerton. Mon: 8 p.m., DJ
Souless, free.

BLUE LAGUNA: 696 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-376-2583, www.bluelagunaoc.com. Fri: 9 p.m., Ladies' Night. Sat: 9 p.m., DJs Brothers From Another, free. Wed: 8 p.m., DJ Bodeez, free.

BOWLMOR LANES: 2405 Park Ave., Tustin, 714-258-2695, www.bowlmor.com/orangecounty/ home.php. Mon: 9 p.m.-1 a.m., Monday Night Strike. \$17.

CHATEAUX RESTAURANT: 18912 Macarthur Blvd., Irvine, 949-833-1900, www.chateauxlounge. com. Thu-Fri: 9 p.m. Groove.

COHIBA NIGHTCLUB AND CIGAR LOUNGE: 110

E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-491-5220, www.
cohibalongbeach.com. Fri-Sat: 9 p.m., Hip-hop,
R&B, and Top 40, \$20. Mon-Tue: 9 p.m., DJ, hip-

hop, and R&B, free.

COMMONWEALTH LOUNGE: 112 E.
Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-525-8888,
www.commonwealthlounge.com. Thu: 5 p.m.,
Ladies' Night, with DJ Cocoe, free. Sat: 9 p.m.,

FLIGHT BISTRO: 8082 Adams Ave., Huntington Beach, 714-374-8300, www.flightoc.com. Fri: 9 p.m., Fresh Fridays. Sat: 9 p.m., Flight Saturdays.

GALLAGHER'S PUB & GRILL: 300 Pacific Coast Hwy Ste. 113, Huntington Beach, 714-536-2422, www.gallagherspub.com. Thu: 9 p.m., DJ Richard Wayne, free.

HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb com. Fri: Boybar.

HURRICANES BAR & GRILL: 200 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-374-0500, www. hurricanesbargrill.com. Thu: 9 p.m., DJ Dime, free. Fri: 9 p.m., DJ Curse, \$5. Sat: 9 p.m., DJ Justin, \$5. Wed: 9 p.m., DJ Gil, free. KAVIKAS GRILL & BAR: 95 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-432-8700, www.kavikas.com. Fri: 9 p.m., After Dark Ultra Lounge, free.

KITSCH BAR: 891 Baker St., Ste. A10, Costa Mesa, 714-546-8580, www.kitschbar.com. Tue-Thu: 9 p.m., DJ 5 Disk, free. Fri: 9 p.m., DJ Anthony, free. Sat: 9 p.m., DJs Jon & Edwin, free.

LA CAVE: 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-646-7944, www.lacaverestaurant.com. Wed: 10 p.m., The Underground Lounge, free.

LANDMARK STEAK HOUSE: 3520 E. Coast Hwy., Corona del Mar, 949-675-5556, www. landmarknewport.com. Thu-Sat: 10 p.m., After Dinner DJ.

LIQUID LOUNGE: 3522 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-7564, www.liquidloungelongbeach.com. Wed: 8 p.m., DJ Dizzy vs. the Beer Barons, free. MAI TAI BAR: 97 Aquarium Way, Long Beach,

MAITAI BAR: 97 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-435-1200, www.maitaibar.com. Fri: 9:30 p.m., Thank Goose It's Friday. Sat: 9:30 p.m., House Party.



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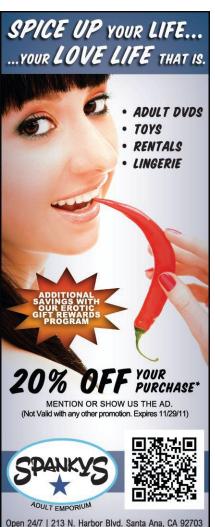
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MEMPHIS AT THE SANTORA: 201 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-564-1064, www.memphiscafe.com/ santora/. Fri: 10 p.m., Downtown Sound, local DJs spin rock, funk, soul, country and everything in between.

MEMPHIS SOUL CAFE: 2920 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, 714-432-7685, www.memphiscafe.com.
Thu: 10 p.m., University of Groove, free. Fri: 10 p.m., Versatile, DJ Cocoe and guests mix hip-hop, funk and house. Sat: 10 p.m., White Collar, Ben Danger and guest playing an eclectic collection of electrodance anthems. Wed: 10 p.m., EssenChill, DJ Danny Love spins as you drink and munch.

MOSUN/CLUB M: 680 Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-497-5646, www.mosunclubm.com. Fri: 9 p.m., Club Rhythm, \$10.

OCEAN AVENUE RESTAURANT AND BREWERY: 237 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-497-3381, www.oceanbrewing.com. Fri-Sat: 9:30 p.m., DJ Nights Tue: 9:30 p.m. Throwback Tuesdays

Nights. Tue: 9:30 p.m., Throwback Tuesdays.

ORIGINAL MIKE'S: 100 S. Main St., Santa Ana,
714-550-7764, www.originalmikes.com. Thu:
9 p.m., College Night, bike night and cigar
club. free.

PROOF BAR: 215 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-953-2660, www.proofbar.com. Sun: 9 p.m., Wreck Hall, free.

SEVILLA NIGHT CLUB: 140 Pine Ave., Long Beach, 562-495-1111, www.sevillanightclub.com. Thu: Mecca, 18+, \$5; \$15 after 10 p.m. Fri: 9 p.m., Spot. Sat: 9 p.m., Saturdays Belong to Sevilla, 21+.

SHARKEEZ: 211 Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-960-5282, www.sharkeez.net. Tue: 9 p.m., 99 Tuesdays, '90s-themed party, free.

SKY ROOM AT THE BREAKERS: 40 S. Locust Ave., Long Beach, 562-983-2703, www. theskyroom.com. Sat: 6 p.m., Up Lounge. SUTRA LOUNGE: 1870 Harbor Blvd., Ste. 200,

Costa Mesa, 949-722-7103, www.sutraoc.com. Fri: Sutra Friday.

TAPAS FLAVORS OF SPAIN: 4253 Martingale Way, Newport Beach, 949-756-8194, www. tapasflavorsofspain.com. Tue: 9:30 p.m., Focus Tuesdays, \$15.

TIKI BAR: 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-548-3533, www.tikibaroc.com. Wed: 9 p.m., Upgrade Drum & Bass, free.

WOODY'S WHARF: 2318 Newport Blvd., Newport Beach, 949-675-0474, www.woodyswharf.com. Thu: 10 p.m., Action Thursdays, free.

drag

CLUB RIPPLES: 5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-433-0357, www.clubripples.com. **Thu:** 8 p.m., The Dreamgirls Revue.

eclectic

ALOHA GRILL: 222 Main St., Ste. 110, Huntington Beach, 714-374-4427, www.alohagrill.com. Fri-Sun: 5 p.m., Live Music, free.

COMMONWEALTH LOUNGE: 112 E.

Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-525-8888, www.commonwealthlounge.com. **Mon**: 10 p.m., Anything & Everything, free.

HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. Fri: 10 p.m., Jukebox Fridays, DJ Cheetah Pete takes requests, free.

THE PIKE RESTAURANT & BAR: 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www. pikelongbeach.com. Sun: 6-9 p.m., iPod Sundays, bring your own music and show off those awesome playlist skills, free.

karaoke

ALEX'S BAR: 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com. Tue: 10 p.m., Karaoke, free.

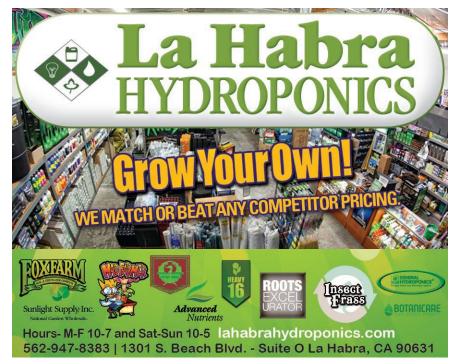
ANARCHY LIBRARY: 13250 Woodruff Ave., Downey, 562-803-9134, www.theanarchylibrary. com. Mon: 9:30 p.m., Live Band Karaoke, get onstage with a live band and sing your fave tunes

onstage with a live band and sing your fave tunes. **AULD DUBLINER:** 2497 Park Ave., Tustin,
714-259-1562, www.aulddubliner.com. **Tue:**10 p.m., Karaoke Night.

THE BUTTERFLY LOUNGE: 719 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-2243, www.butterflylounge.com. Wed: 9 p.m., Karaoke Wednesday, free.

CAFEOKE DING DONG DANG: 9738 Garden Grove Blvd., Ste. 9, Garden Grove, 714-636-6237. Daily: 2 p.m., Karaoke.

CANTINA LOUNGE: 2736 Nutwood Ave., Fullerton,





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714-879-8094, www.cantinalounge.com. **Mon:** 10 p.m., Karaoke Mondays.

- **CLANCY'S IRISH PUB & RESTAURANT: 803** E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-437-1836, www. clancyslb.com. Sat: 9 p.m., Karaoke. Mon: 8 p.m.,
- Karaoke Contest, free. **DETROIT BAR:** 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-0600, www.detroitbar.com. Sun: 9 p.m., Sunday Karaoke.
- FOXFIRE RESTAURANT: 5717 E. Santa Ana Canyon Rd., Anaheim, 714-974-5400, www. foxfirerestaurant.com. **Mon-Tue**: 8:45 p.m., Karaoke, free.
- GASLAMP RESTAURANT & BAR: 6251 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-596-4718, www. thegaslamprestaurant.com. **Wed:** 5:30 p.m., Open Mic Nights, free.
- GOOD OL' BOYS SALOON: 10624 Katella Ave., Anaheim, 714-535-4335, www.goodolboyssaloon. com. Thu: Karaoke.
- HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb. com. Mon: 10 p.m., Monday Madness Karaoke,
- HOGUE BARMICHAEL'S: 3950 Campus Dr., Newport Beach, 949-261-6270, www. hoguebarmichaels.com/index2.html. Mon 9 p.m., Karaoke Madness.
- HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 Disneyland Dr., Anaheim. 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. Wed: 10:30 p.m., Voodoo Karaoke, free.
- KAVIKAS GRILL & BAR: 95 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-432-8700, www.kavikas.com. Tue: 8 p.m., All Request Karaoke, free.
- LIQUID LOUNGE: 3522 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-7564, www. liquidloungelongbeach.com. Fri: 8 p.m.; Sat: 8 p.m., Karaoke With Ramsey & Reese, free.
- NADINE'S IRISH MIST: 16655 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, 562-592-7000, www. nadinesirishmist.com. Wed: 7 p.m., Karaoke Wednesdays, free.
- PARADISE PIANO BAR & RESTAURANT: 1800 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-590-8773, www. paradisepianobar.com. Thu: 9:30 p.m., Karanke Thursdays
- PIERCE STREET ANNEX: 330 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa, 949-646-8500, www.piercestreetonline.com. Mon: 9 p.m., Karaoke and Dancing.
- PINEAPPLE HILL SALOON & GRILL: 654 E. First St., Tustin, 714-669-9818, www.pineapplehillgrill. com. Wed-Sun: 9 p.m., Karaoke.
- THE PROSPECTOR: 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-438-3839, www.prospectorlongbeach. com. Wed, Fri: 8 p.m., Karaoke, free.
- THE PUKA BAR: 710 W. Willow St., Long Beach, 562-997-6896, www.pukabar.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., Karaoke With Sammy.
- THE SLIDEBAR ROCK-N-ROLL KITCHEN: 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com. **Mon**: 9 p.m., Rockstar Karaoke.
- THE STARTING GATE: 5052 Katella Ave., Rossmoor, 562-598-8957. Sun: 6:30 p.m.; Mon: 8 p.m., Karaoke.
- SURF CITY SALOON: 18528 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach, 714-963-7744, www.myspace. com/surfcitysaloon. Mon, Wed-Thu: 9 p.m., Center Stage Karaoke, with Josh.

 THE SWALLOW'S INN: 31786 Camino Capistrano,
- San Juan Capistrano, 949-493-3188, www. swallowsinn.com. Wed: 7 p.m., Karaoke.

 TACO BEACH CANTINA: 211 Pine Ave., Long
- Beach, 562-983-1337. **Wed, Sun**: 9 p.m., Karaoke, with Bobby Vegas.
- TAKA-O JAPANESE RESTAURANT: 425 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-498-7111, www. taka-orestaurant.com. Fri-Sat: 9 p.m.; Sun-Thu:
- TIME OUT TAVERN & NIGHT CLUB: 27822 Aliso Creek Rd., Aliso Viejo, 949-362-5919, www. timeoutsportsnightclub.com. Mon: 9 p.m., Karaoke With Les, free.

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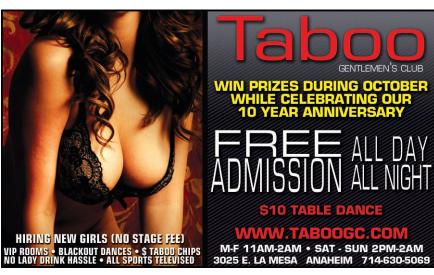
BRAVO NIGHT CLUB: 1490 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-533-2291, www.clubbravo.com. Fri: 8 p.m., Metropolis, ladies free before 10 p.m. Sat: 9 p.m., Alternative Saturday,

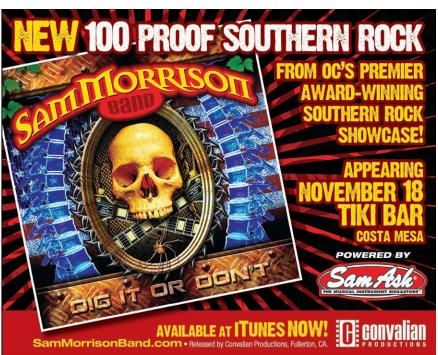












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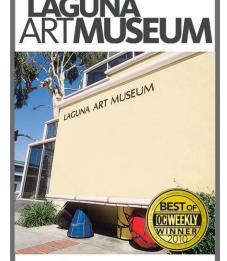
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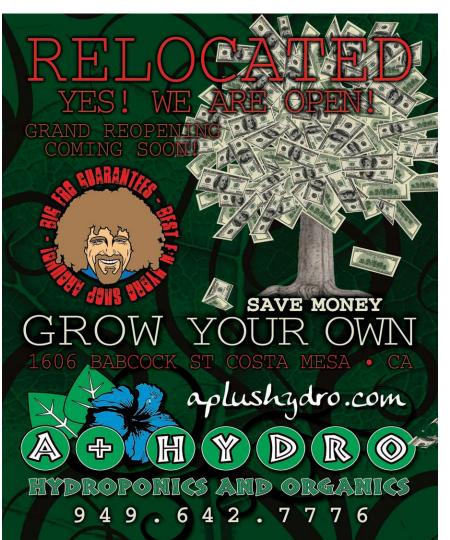
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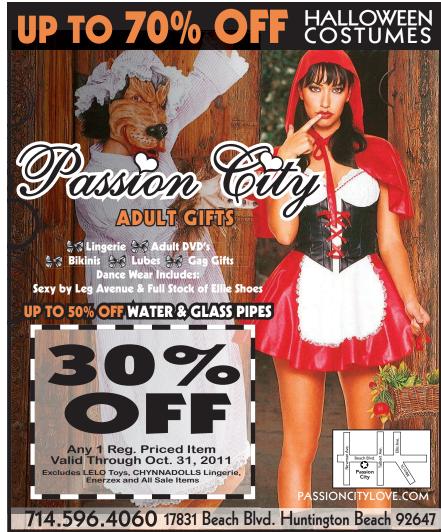


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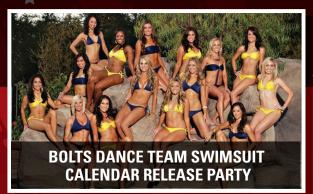






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savage love»

» DAN SAVAGE

I'm a college freshman. I thought it would be the place to come out, but the sad fact is college hasn't changed anything. I'm still unable to admit my sexuality to my friends, teammates, classmates and hallmates. I have thought about joining the LGBT organizations, but those guys are too "out" for me—not that there's any problem with that. I just don't think being gay is anyone else's business, unless I want them to know. The hardest part is seeing other freshmen go out to parties, hook up and date when I don't have the opportunity to do so. I've resorted to going on Craigslist, but my encounters have been weird. What should I do? Closeted Undergrad

You're not required to disclose who you're going out with or the gender of the folks with whom you would like to go out. But keeping your sexual orientation a secret indefinitely—not your sexual interests (which you can keep to yourself), but your sexual orientation—will ultimately warp your psyche and your life.

Think about it from the other side: What would the straight guys on your team have to do in order to hide their straightness from you? They could never mention their girlfriends, go out on dates or hook up with someone they met at a party. They would have to hide their porn and be careful to not check out girls in public. They could never get engaged, get married or have kids. They might be able to have furtive, secretive, shame-driven sexual encounters with other closeted heterosexuals they met online or in places where closeted straight people gathered to have anonymous sex, but finding love—true and lasting love—would be extremely difficult.

It wouldn't be impossible—some gay people managed to find lasting love back in the bad old days—but it would be difficult. And the sneaking around and hiding and lying would ultimately warp their psyches and their lives.

If you don't want to get warped, you're going to have to come out. And once you're out, you don't have to hang out with gay people with whom you don't click, and you don't have to be gay the way, say, the LGBT groupers on your campus are gay. Remember: Gay men who are out at your age (18?) tend to be a bit gayer than the average gay dude. They're out in part because they can't be in. And God bless 'em, and more power to 'em, and the gay rights/liberation movement would never have gotten off the ground without 'em. But since you can pass, you've had the option of waiting.

You have, of course, the option of never coming out. But as you're discovering, it's hard to date in the closet, and DL-enabling sites such as Craigslist and Grindr aren't going to deliver the kind of connections you want. So long as you're limited to quickly arranged hookups with guys you don't know, can't risk getting to know and can't be seen with in public, all of your encounters are going to be weird. Not because all the guys on Craigslist or Grindr are weird—there are good guys on both sites—but because you're trying to have a life and keep it secret, that tends to attract weirdos without lives.

Look, you're only 18. You've got time. But what you're going to realize in not too much more time is that dating and finding love—or even just sex—inside the closet is nearly impossible. You can remain in the closet and keep your business secret, but you won't have much of a life in there. And when you realize that, you'll come out. First to a friend or two, then to your family, then to everyone. And once you're all the way out, you'll find that the guys you've been focusing on—the "too out" guys—aren't the only gay guys out there. Just some of the best.

I know it's hard. But you can do it. All it takes is opening your mouth and saying the words.

Last night, I was blowing a male friend. When I glanced up from "my work," I saw he was texting someone. I didn't say anything and finished the job, but I was offended. Another friend says I should've mentioned it because he might have been taking a picture. At the very least, what he did was rude. Any insight from you?

When Blowing Blows

He was taking pictures or making a video and may have been emailing pics/vids to his buddies in real time—don't be an idiot, WBB—and you should've snatched that camera from his hand and stuffed it so far up his ass you could've sent yourself a picture of the roof of his mouth. Please cut this out and tape it to the mirror in your bathroom: Any girl who's uninhibited enough to blow a "friend" has to be uninhibited enough to blow up at that friend if she spots him taking sex pictures without her consent.

I'm a straight male, age 26. I've been with my girlfriend for seven years. We're lucky in that we have a group of friends that is into having sex with us. My question is, what is the proper etiquette for condom use between my girlfriend and me when others are present? We don't use condoms when we're alone, so we haven't been using condoms when we're in front of others. They are using them, and I use them if I have intercourse with another girl, so the risk for the two of us intuitively seems minimal. Is there anything we should be concerned about?

Group-Sex Rookie

If you and your girlfriend have been tested, and you're "fluid-bonded" (ugh! That term!), and you're not having sex in front of strangers at, say, a swingers club or party where someone might misinterpret your condomfree sex as a license to initiate condom-free sex with randoms to whom they are not fluid-bonded-preventing these worst-case/ biggest-idiot scenarios is why many organized swingers clubs require condoms-for-all during group/public parties-then I don't see why you and your girlfriend should have to use condoms with each other. So long as you're careful about always putting on a condom when you need one, you're both willing to assume the higher risks of acquiring one of the STIs that can be passed through skin-to-skin contact, and if seeing you two go condom-free doesn't make your friends so insanely jealous that they can't get it up/on in your presence, then knock yourselves out.

This is in response to Messed-Up Junk. His junk sounds just like my junk! But my junk isn't messed up. I'm a transman—so a 2-inch "micropenis" actually sounds pretty damn good! Anyway, I wanted to say this to him: Don't let your junk stop you from hopping in bed with whomever you damn well please. I know lots of guys with junk like yours who get plenty of action from lots of fine ladies—and gents. As long as your junk gives you sexual pleasure and you are willing to pleasure your partner, there is much fun to be had. Yes, having a body that's different can be terrifying. Be honest and upfront, but don't let your head and your fear get in the way of hot sex.

Pumped-Up Junk

Thanks for sharing, PUJ.

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The project consists of
installing antennas on a new
65" moneoucalytus and
equipment located at peade 65' monoeucalyptus and equipment located at grade. No alternatives to the project were identified. Public Comments for this project should be forwarded to: Natasha Orbiso Bechtel Corporation 6131 Orangethorpe Avenue, Suite 500 Buena Park, California 90620 norbiso@bechtel.com (714) 676-2836

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Notice of the Initiation of
the Section 106 Process:
Public Participation
AT&T Mobility LLC plan to
modify a telecommunications facility at:
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Long Beach, \(\O \) A 9802

The project consists of
modifying the existing
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new conduits. No
alternatives to the project
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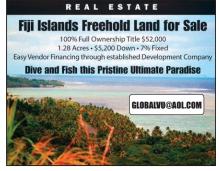
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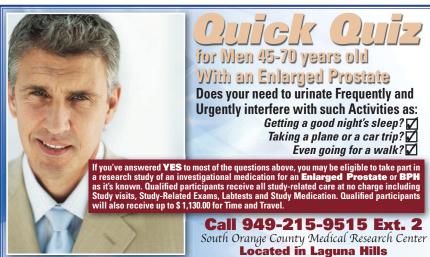
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